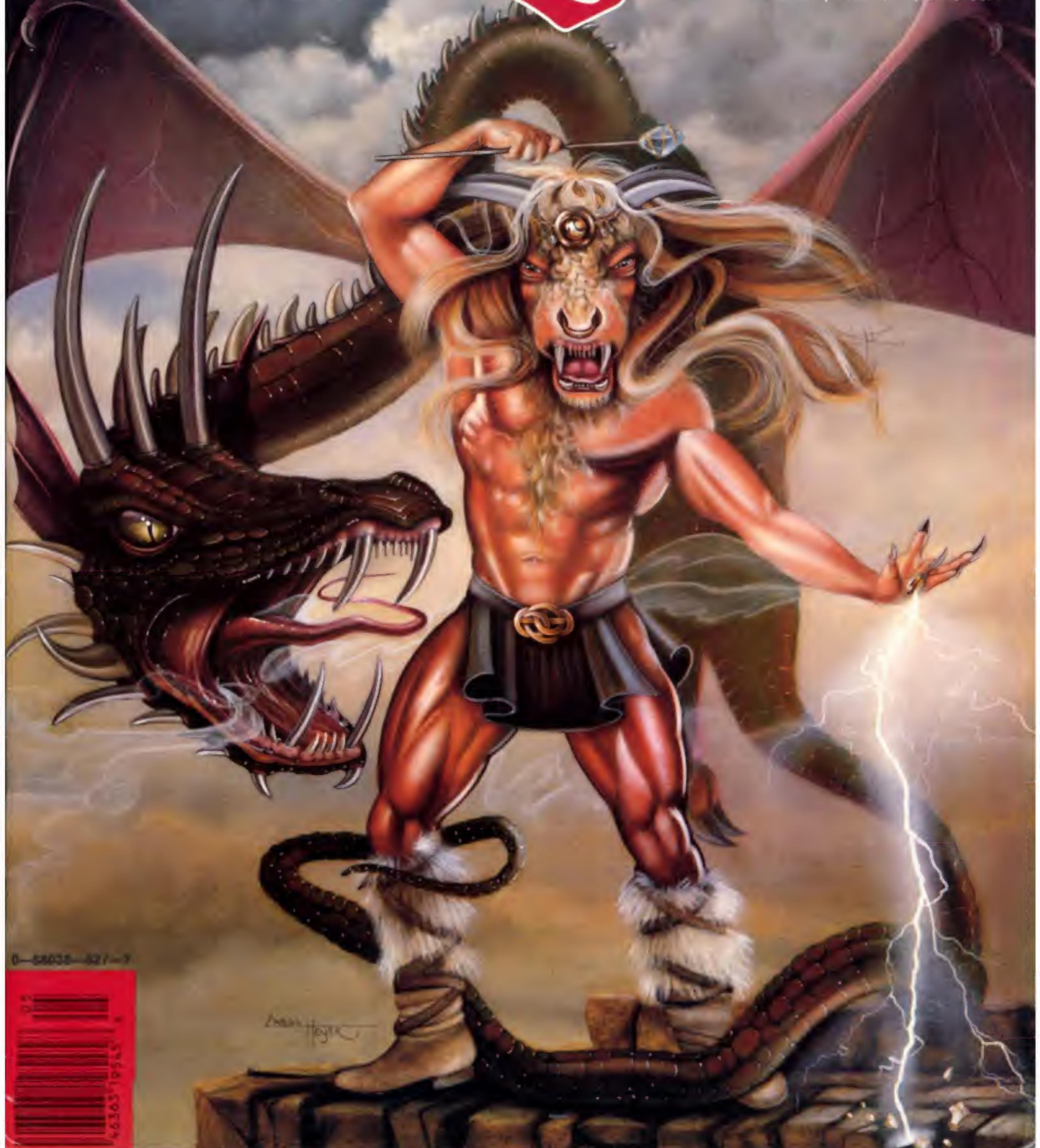


Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR® ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

MAY/JUNE 1990 ISSUE #23
VOL IV, NO. 5 \$3.75 USA



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DANIEL J. HOWELL
1990

DUNGEON®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR® ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

MAY/JUNE 1990 ISSUE #23



COVER: A minotaur casting spells? What's going on here? Carol Heyer's cover painting won't tell, so you'll have to read "Deception Pass."



A Few Tips on Home-Grown Modules

Dungeon Masters are game designers. It's an inescapable fact. I don't know of a single DM who uses only prepared modules and never changes a word of the text. Most of you write your own adventures from scratch at least some of the time, and some of these "home grown" adventures will see print in this magazine.

Because we can't always give detailed critiques on your submissions, I thought I'd mention some of the more common problems that we see in submitted modules. If you're thinking of sending us an adventure, look it over carefully with regard to the following areas.

Be sure your adventure tells an interesting story. Don't spend pages and pages giving local history for the last several thousand years, but be sure the DM who will run your adventure has a feel for the historical context in which events take place. Then spend a bit of time giving the set-up: Who has done what to whom, and how the PCs become involved in the story. Avoid using coercion (*geas* spells, etc.) on the PCs. They should have their own motivations for getting caught up in the tale.

Give your major NPC antagonists specific goals and motives, and make them interesting characters. Avoid the stereotypes of the crazed, evil wizard in his dark tower (and his ilk from the other classes). Why is he crazy? For that matter, why is he evil? Even monsters (assuming they have some intelligence) have personality and motivations. Spice up your monster encounters with a line or two explaining what these creatures are doing in the area, and how they will react to adventurers.

If you've designed a complicated action—an ambush, a climactic final battle, etc.—give enough information to run it properly. What tactics will the NPC foes use? Where are they located at the start of the fight? What will they do if the battle turns against them? A small diagram can be invaluable in complicated situations (see "Deception Pass" in this issue for some good examples).

And finally, be sure to include complete statistical information (in the proper format) for all major and minor NPCs and monsters that will be encountered in your adventure. If you design a new monster, give detailed information so that the DM can not only run it in your adventure, but use it elsewhere, too.

If you think of your module as a gripping story peopled with interesting characters (NPCs and monsters), you'll increase the possibility of someday seeing your name on a DUNGEON adventure.

Barbara G. Young

Vol. IV, No. 5

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Randy Maxwell THE VINEYARD VALES
(D&D® game, levels 2-4) A plague of locusts is bad enough, but when the locusts are each a yard long, the farmers need professional help! . . . 6

Willie Walsh THE PYRAMID OF JENKEL
(AD&D® game, levels 8-10) A voice in the darkness offered him power, with only one string attached: First he had to find some adventurers. 18

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Richard Stump DECEPTION PASS
(AD&D game, levels 7-9) Magical minotaurs? Mutant giants? Vampires? One or more of these is preying upon the caravans, and you're going to stop them. 40

"Who can know why the Cosmic Balance exists, why Fate exists and the Lords of the Higher Worlds, why there must always be a champion to fight such battles?"

Sepiriz, to Elric
Stormbringer, Michael Moorcock

LETTERS

BBS Alert!

I'm in the process of trying to compile a list of computer bulletin board systems that support gaming forums, for possible information in a service publication. If you or anyone you know is in contact with such a BBS, please write me. I'll try to get in touch with the sysops [system operators] and ask if they would like to be included. Thank you for your help.

M. Williams
2410 S. Fern St.
Arlington, Virginia 22202

The Best In Europe

In response to Steve Smith's letter in issue 20: You must be kidding. I have played and DMed both D&D® and AD&D® games. Believe me, I'm as serious about roleplaying as the next person, and I'm mostly into the D&D game (I think it holds more possibilities in character development).

I enjoy DUNGEON® Magazine, and it bothers me that you would like what few D&D adventures that are published to be rubbed out. I know that in the USA, the AD&D game is preferred, but in most European countries, the D&D game rules. Seeing as DUNGEON Adventures is sold in Europe as well, I think your request is unfair. I would further ask the DUNGEON Adventures editors to put in more solo quests.

P.S. for DMs: If you're having magic item trouble—what are thieves for?

Yoav Nachmias
Tel Aviv, Israel

See? Troll!

I just wanted to say that I was really impressed with the cover of issue #19. It's really great. In fact, I actually cut it out and hung it on my wall, right next to the poster in issue #21. By the way, what kind of creature is that in the poster, anyway? I have a fairie book

that describes it pretty much as a peg powler, but I'm not sure. Is that what it is, or did you make it up?

Could you possibly put more posters in your magazine?

Allen White
No Town Given

Daniel Horne, our poster art artist, calls the creature a sea troll (as in "See? Troll!"—the joke is Roger Moore's). We sometimes refer to it as the "Swamp Thing." This painting first appeared on the cover of the May 1988 issue of DRAGON® Magazine.

Gem of the Giants GP

I love to read your magazine, even if I don't play very much. It gives me ideas for other adventures and some tricks to use, but we have a problem. "White Fang," in issue #20, has no price or experience points mentioned for the Gem of the Giants. Personally, I loved the adventure. It gave me a chance to play without getting everyone together in one place. I would appreciate it if you would include the price of these things in future modules.

Chris Cycus
Lakewood, Colorado

The diamond is worth 5,000 gp. Under AD&D 2nd Edition rules, no experience points are given for picking up treasure.

Need the Books?

I am a 16-year-old who has been role-playing since age eight, and has been a Dungeon Master since age 13. I just received DUNGEON issue #22 and am very pleased. It's a great opportunity for kids who enjoy role-playing. Its short adventures are great for the shorter attention spans of kids, and it costs about half as much as a regular module. My only complaint is that in some of your adventures, it says to consult a TSR hardback (like in "The Leopard

Men," when it says to look at the NPC monks in the AD&D 1st Edition *Players Handbook* and barbarians in *Unearthed Arcana*. Well, being a teenager saving money for college, it is hard to buy all these books or even borrow them. I feel if you put all the information in the adventure, you would eliminate a lot of problems for the DM. I believe this would be greatly appreciated by everyone who uses your magazine.

Tim Seidel
Eureka, Montana

We do expect that all DMs have a Players' Handbook and Dungeon Master's Guide. We try to include enough information to play an adventure, but we will often point you to other books where you can get more in-depth information if you want it.

A Message From King Thar

Thar sez, Bring dis Terra guy to Udhgar Palace. Hav' big axe sharpened. Cuz "Rank Amateurs" [issue #22] uzed da wrong map! Good map be in GAZ10 [*The Orcs of Thar*]. Brok'n Landz be nice kontree, lots uv mountenz, pretee glashurs, an' trollz forest too—not all brok'n lands. Furzt, we rip his legz off, then sprinkl' salt, then tinkle, then be-head, then kill.

Thar, King of the Broken Lands
Chief of Orcus Rex, and
Supreme Commander of the Legion

King Thar is referring to the map on page 51 of issue #22. He'd like you to use the map titled "The World Above—Upper Broken Lands" on the fold-up map sheet in GAZ10. I think he may be overreacting, since the adventure is quite playable as is. Then again, maybe we'd better do as he says. I feel honor bound, as editor, to accompany the author to Udhgar Palace and explain how this error occurred. If you don't get another issue of DUNGEON Adventures, please come and rescue us.

DUNGEON® (ISSN 0890-7102) is published bimonthly by TSR, Inc. 201 Sheridan Springs Rd., Lake Geneva, WI 53147. The mailing address for all material except subscription orders is DUNGEON, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147; telephone (414) 248-3625.

Subscriptions: Subscription rates via second-class mail are as follows: \$18 in U.S. funds for six issues sent to an address in the U.S. or Canada, \$35 in U.S. funds for surface mail delivery to any other address, and \$52 in U.S. funds for air mail delivery to any other address. Prices are subject to change without notice. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Payment should be by check or money order, made payable to TSR, Inc., or by charge to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards. Send subscription orders with payments to: TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 72089, Chicago IL 60678. The issue of expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change, in order to assure uninterrupted delivery.

Back issues: Limited back issues of this magazine are available from the TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. For a copy of the current mail-order catalog, write to the above address.

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Boxed Text: No!

I just received my second issue of DUNGEON® Magazine (#21), and in issue #20 I take it there is a large discussion on the subject of boxed scripts. Here's my answer: NO!

Phew! I had to get that out of my system. Think about it for a moment. Here's the situation. The PCs are fleeing from a large band of ogres when they enter a room. Suppose the boxed description says, "When you enter this room, you see a large sack in the far corner. To the north is a passage leading straight for about 30', but you can see no farther. To your left you can see an unsheathed sword with what looks like elven runes." If the PCs are running, how are they going to see this? If they do see this, they'll be distracted and run right into the wall!

What happened to the map symbols in issue #21? It's not like I haven't got them all memorized, but having them available for reference helps. And before I forget, how about making one issue with two *long* adventures, preferably AD&D® adventures.

Greg Muller
Nepean, Ontario

Room descriptions (boxed or otherwise) tell the PCs what they can see if they are looking around. If they aren't looking, they obviously don't see much detail. That doesn't mean those items aren't there. If the PCs escape from the ogres and return to the room, they might have more of a chance to look around. That's when the DM will read or paraphrase the room description to the players. The DM should have read the module through before playing it and should know what is in the room. If the ogres are getting too close, that sword might trip the leader, causing a chain reaction that lets the PCs escape in the nick of time.

For those of you keeping score, it seems that our mail is fairly evenly split but running slightly in favor of boxed descriptions.

Boxed Text: So-So

In issue #19 you asked your readers to respond to the question: Should every adventure have boxed descriptions to be read to the players?

I have been a DM of the AD&D game for 10 years now, and when the first

modules were published with the boxed text I thought, "What a great idea!" But I soon found out, as I'm sure other DMs did, that my players quickly became bored and disinterested, no matter how energetically I read the boxed text to them.

My players and I feel that reading straight from the boxed text takes away from the enjoyment of the game. It does not allow the DM to use his or her skills for entertaining the players. What it does do is cause the players to rely on a sometimes inadequate description of an area or encounter.

I am not, however, saying that the boxes are entirely bad. They do give the DM a general description of the area that is grouped together in one spot instead of spread all over the entire entry. I usually read the boxed text to myself, and then give my players my own personal description.

Carl V. Tuttle, Jr.
Brussels, Belgium

Boxed Text: Yes!

I have been playing the AD&D game for ten years now, and I've subscribed to DUNGEON Adventures since the beginning. I enjoy the magazine very much, and it is of inestimable value to me.

In the boxed text vs. non-boxed text controversy, I greatly desire boxed text! Having discovered how hard it is and how bothersome it is to specify boxed text while writing an adventure, I would hesitate to make it mandatory. However, it has often happened that I have been skimming a room description, giving information to the players, and then said "and under the bed there's . . . uh . . . I mean . . . dust, yeah, that's it!" thus giving away that there is something under the bed. If people think boxed text insults their intelligence, then they should simply ignore it or paraphrase it in their own words. No one forces people to use the boxed text, but for those who like it, it is very difficult to do without it in a quickly prepared adventure.

One thing that I have found annoying that was voiced several issues ago is that the cover of the magazine is always revealing some facet of the module inside. In the issue where the red dragon Flame returned, my characters immediately suspected a red dragon somewhere when they saw the cover

with the red dragon holding all the diamonds. The cover with the green cows ruins that plot line, and there have been similar occasions.

And a request that I put out to all module designers: How about writing some adventures that center on solo characters who are not thieves? It would be a challenge but much appreciated for when I am playing with only one other person.

Matthew Vienneau
Toronto, Ontario

An Over-full Deck

Congratulations to Randy Maxwell and his creativity ("House of Cards," issue #19). However, I believe the opponents overpower the player characters. There are 67 HD worth of daemons, an ice devil, and 12 energy drainers compared with an average of six PCs of 10th level. The problem is the spell-casting powers of the daemons.

Also, the doors which are basically to be opened only by the PCs [create a problem]. The Talons, Donjon, and Void cards can eliminate three party members. No thief, once realizing how the card doors work, would try all of them. Life before greed. The doors are excessively protected. A 35% magic resistance would have been more reasonable.

Also, the Void card on the front cover should be a Skull card.

Randy Kosiorek
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Ω

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THE VINEYARD VALES

BY RANDY MAXWELL

The lizard men are just pining for the fjords.

Artwork by Tom Baxa

"Writing a module is a lot like baking a cake," Randy tells us. "Sometimes it's a little overdone, sometimes it's a little underdone, and no matter how you spice it, it's not to everyone's taste. However, cakes are finished by the baker and not by those who eat them. Modules, on the other hand, are finished by those who play them and not by those who write them. I simply supply the cake. DMs and players supply the frosting."

"The Vineyard Vales" is a D&D® adventure for 4-6 characters of levels 2-4 (about 15 total levels). The adventure takes place in the Soderfjord Jarldoms and is compatible with GAZ 7 *The Northern Reaches Gazetteer*. Unless the DM has an established campaign milieu, the aforementioned gazetteer is recommended for use with this module. While it is not required for play, the gazetteer information adds depth and fills in many minor details, allowing the DM to present players with a more complete, polished, and "living" world than is otherwise possible. The DM using his own campaign world need only set the module in any frontier area near a marsh.

Adventure Background

As the adventure opens, the PCs should already be in the Soderfjord Jarldoms. They may be following a treasure map, passing through in search of adventure, or traveling to one of the larger cities of the northern kingdoms—Soderfjord, Norrvik, or Zeaburg—in hopes of selling their swords and services to the highest bidder. Whatever the reason, the PCs are in the area known as the Vineyard Vales (just west of the hex numbered 16, above the "FJ" in "Soderfjord" on the map on page 18 of GAZ 7).

The Vineyard Vales is an area of green rolling farmland between Great Marsh and the Otofjord River. The Vales are not under the control of any jarl or jarldom and, for the moment, enjoy an independent existence.

The most bountiful and rewarding crop being grown in the Vales is grapes. The vineyards of the Vales are rapidly becoming known for the quality of their wines. "Vale Burgundy" and "Vale Sauterne" are renowned table wines in the kingdoms of Vestland and Ostland. They also have excellent reputations as far away as Rockhome, Ylaruam, and Karameikos.

A secondary wine that the Vales produce is the infamous Jarldom 20-20, also known as JD 20-20 and usually referred to simply as "Jolly Dwarf." This is a cheap and very sweet wine that delivers a powerful wallop. It also delivers a hangover that can leave the most hardened and stoical of warriors bleating and pleading for mercy. For all its drawbacks, the wine is extremely popular in the taverns of the north. It is precisely because the Vale vineyards are becoming known for their wines that the area has ceased to be seen as simple frontier steads and is now considered valuable property.

For the Dungeon Master

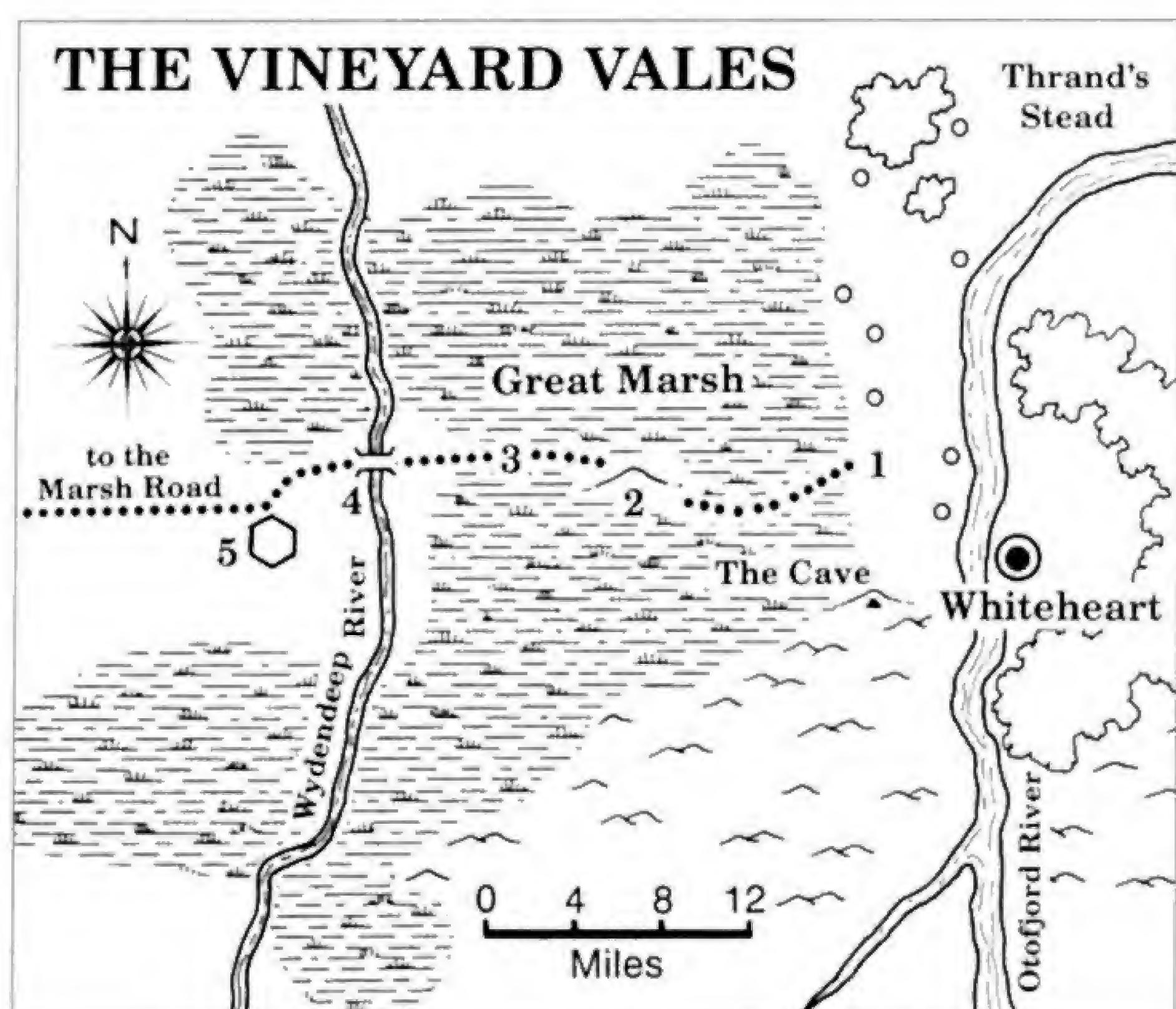
The Vale farmers realize the value of their steads and have banded together in a loose confederation known as the Vineyard Vale Defense League. In addition, they have hired many mercenaries from Whiteheart, a city just across the Otofjord River from the Vales (see The Vineyard Vales map). Thus, anyone wishing to move in and take over the Vales by force is in for a fight. The Vale farmers are from many different clans and nations and do not wish to seek the protection of any jarl. They prefer to remain independent of any jarldom (and any jarl's taxes).

Even with the defense league and mercenaries, all is not well in the Vales. Giant locusts, normally subterranean creatures and of no problem to farmers, have in the last six weeks come in great numbers out of caves to the south. The hungry locusts have attacked the vineyards, eating the grapes, leaves, and tender new vines. They have stripped the vineyards to such an extent that only the tough, twisted stalks of the grapevines remain.

The farmers have no idea what has caused the giant locusts to swarm. The defense league is currently discussing the matter and arguing over what's to be done. In the meantime, several farmers have lost heart. With their vineyards ruined for the season and no solution to the problem in sight, they have abandoned their steads. In addition, as if to add insult to injury, the lizard men from Great Marsh have attacked and destroyed several steads.

Rhungold and His Plans

What the farmers don't know is that their current problems with giant lo-



custs and lizard men are part of a well-orchestrated plot for taking over the Vineyard Vales.

A mage known as Rhungold the Trickster (see area 5E for complete details), once a member of the Royal Household of the Court of Cnute of Zeaburg in the Kingdom of Ostland, has had his eyes on the Vales for some time. Rhungold was a minor councilor to the king of Ostland, advising on matters of magical research. He abused his position by *extorting money from other wizards for* advising in their favor, whether their research was worthwhile or not. He also duped many of the household into investing large sums into fraudulent magical research projects (a potion of *immortality*, a *ring of infinite wishes*, etc.). Rhungold simply took the money and had a good time. If investors pressed him on the subject, he would tell them that progress was being made on a particular magical item, but "you can't rush magic." The Royal Household grew tired of his endless web of treachery and deceit; they booted him out of the kingdom and forbade his return.

Rhungold is of a mind to start his own jarldom, and the Vineyard Vales, with

their excellent source of revenue, seem a good place to start it. He has heard of the Black Eagle Barony in Karameikos and would like to pattern his own jarldom after it, but first he must "win" his kingdom. Rhungold is an astute politician, completely unscrupulous, and an excellent tactician when it comes to maneuvering other people to suit his purposes. For the taking of the Vales, he has a simple three-step plan.

Step 1: Rhungold plans to drive as many farmers as possible from the Vineyard Vales using giant locusts and lizard men. He does this by *polymorphing* himself into a black dragon and terrorizing the lizard men of Great Marsh into doing his bidding.

Step 2: Once the farmers have been driven from the Vales, Rhungold can claim the lands and make them his own clanhold.

Step 3: Once he has claimed the Vales, Rhungold will cease the attacks by giant locusts and lizard men. With the Vales once again safe, he can entice new farmers to take over the abandoned steads. He then need only sit back and take his "fair share" of the profits for taxes and protection.

Thrand's Stead

When the PCs arrive in the Vales, step 1 of Rhungold's plan is well under way. Many steeds have been abandoned or destroyed.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It is nearing the end of the day, and you are looking for someplace to camp—better yet, someplace that will put walls between you and the night. You are riding leisurely down a cart track through a vineyard toward a rather homely but sturdy-looking stead. Suddenly there is a great whirring noise in the air behind you. You turn just in time to see six giant locusts land among the grapevines and begin stripping the plants of leaves and grapes.

Giant locusts (6): AC 4; HD 2**; hp 9 each; MV 60'(20'), flying 180'(60'); #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 or 1-4 or special; Save F2; ML 8; AL N; BD/33.

If cornered or attacked, the giant locusts bite for 1-2 hp damage. They can also spit a foul brown gooey substance up to 10'. The target of the spittle is treated as AC 9 and, if hit, must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or be incapacitated with nausea for one turn due to the awful smell. When the locusts attempt to flee, there is a 50% chance per locust that it will become confused and accidentally jump into the party instead of away. If this occurs, the DM should choose a victim randomly and make a to-hit roll. If a giant locust hits a character, the victim is battered for 1-4 hp damage. The DM should roll for each locust to see how many of the creatures accidentally land among the PC party.

If the PCs attack or attempt to drive the giant locusts away, all six locusts stand their ground. They are ravenously hungry after a long flight and do not want to leave an area of abundant food. Because of their hunger, these locusts have morale of 8 rather than 5. If a locust fails a morale check, it immediately flies away. The PCs will be unable to follow any escaping locusts due to the speed of the flying creatures and the intervening grapevines.

Just as the last locust is killed or escapes, a group of people from the nearby stead come running up. They hail the PCs and thank them heartily for killing or driving off the locusts. The PCs are invited to eat and spend the

night at the stead. If the PCs just looked on as the locusts ravaged the crops, the people—acolytes, as described later on—are upset at the loss but do not chide the PCs for their inactivity. However, the PCs will be charged 1-6 gp each for room and board at the stead, and they will be treated coolly at best.

Although this particular farm is known locally as Thrand's Stead, it is actually a monastery established by and for clerics of Frey and Freyja. The monastery's real name is the Cloister and Peaceful Settlement of the Brothers and Sisters of Frey and Freyja. Naturally, no one ever calls it that. The place gets its name from the elder in charge of the monastery, Thrand of Vestland.

The monastery is not a place of religious instruction, but a place where new acolytes are sent to contemplate their choice of a religious vocation. If, after a year of hard work in the vineyards, they are still of a mind to join the clergy, they are sent on to various temples and monasteries throughout the north for serious instruction in their faith. However, if at any time during that year they find their faith is not up to the task, they may leave the clergy without penalty or dishonor. At the moment, the monastery contains only Thrand and 14 acolytes.

Thrand of Vestland: AC 4; C6; hp 22; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save C6; ML 9; AL L; I 15, W 17; chain mail, shield, war hammer, sling, *medallion of ESP*; spells: *cure light wounds, purify food and water, bless, speak with animal, continual light*.

Thrand is a kindly, intelligent, well-educated man who is devoted to his Immortals and his acolytes. He can tell the PCs information about the local jarls, feuds, geography, history, and general gossip. He can also tell them a good deal about the kingdoms of Vestland and Ostland, and Soderfjord. He is familiar with the names of most of the nobles, jarls, and aristocracy of the three kingdoms, including the Court of Cnute. Thrand received his training as a cleric in Norrvik, the capital city of Vestland. While in that city, he took many classes in history, politics, and religion at the college located there.

Acolytes (14): AC 6; C1; hp 4 each; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save C1; ML 8; AL L; leather armor, shield, mace.

The acolytes are equally divided be-

tween males and females. They are completely loyal to Thrand. If the PCs are in need of men-at-arms, bearers, guards, or messengers, they will have to seek them elsewhere. Under no circumstances will Thrand allow the acolytes to go adventuring with the PC party. In all instances, the acolytes know much less than Thrand about what is going on in the Vales. If the adventurers question them about anything, the acolytes either do not have the information requested or refer the PCs to Thrand.

When the PCs have been escorted indoors, they meet Thrand in the monastery's large common room. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The leader of these people, a kindly cleric named Thrand, greets you in a large, warm room lit by a blazing fire. "You are welcome to stay as long as you like. We are in need of strong arms and backs at the moment. The acolytes tell me you have seen the giant locusts. Well, their presence is very strange indeed! Giant locusts usually stay in their caves and don't venture forth except in some great need. For them to leave their caves in the hills to the south is uncanny strange, I say. What with the locusts eating the vineyards and the lizard men attacking out of Great Marsh, I'll wager that a third to a half of the steeds have been abandoned or burned.

"We've hired a good many men-at-arms to protect the steeds and fields, but they can't be everywhere and we need them here in the Vales. If we send them gallivanting through the southern hills looking for locusts and trouble, many steeds would be left unprotected, and only Frey knows what would happen then. We, that is, myself and the other farmers—we call ourselves the Vineyard Vale Defense League—have put a few coppers in a pot as reward for any who might have a look into the caves and tell us what's stirred up the locusts."

If the PCs ask for more information about the lizard men, Thrand can tell them only that the creatures have been attacking recently—attacking with more ferocity and frequency than usual. If the PCs accept Thrand's offer to go and have a look in the caves, he supplies them with a map (the DM should

give the players a copy of The Vineyard Vales map with the encounter numbers deleted). The DM may use the hill indicated for the location of the locust cave, or he may use any of the nearby hills to the south. The "few coppers" Thrand mentioned turn out to be 200 gp in assorted coins, primarily copper and silver pieces.

When the PCs are journeying through the Vales, the DM should make encounter checks twice per day due to the marauding lizard men. A roll of 6 on 1d6 indicates an encounter; the DM should choose from the Vale Random Encounters that begin on page 17 or roll 1d8 for a random encounter.

The Cave

The cave is large and vaguely rectangular, about 500' wide by 1,000' long. Its entrance is on the north side of the hill. Upon entering, the PCs immediately notice that the air is very warm and humid, heavily tinged with the odor of burning wood. Various fungi, mosses, and lichen grow on the walls and ceiling, but the floor is bare except for numerous sandy patches. The general atmosphere of the cave is one of stuffy, damp, dismal decay.

A. Shriekers. At this point, a long line of giant mushrooms extends in a wide arc across the cavern, each about 25' from the next. These are not normal mushrooms but are shriekers that react to light and movement. If the PCs set them off, their piercing shrieks startle 10 giant locusts (hp 9 each; full statistics on page 8), the last ones remaining in the cave.

Shriekers (20): AC 7; HD 3; hp 12 each; MV 9'(3'); #AT nil; Dmg nil; Save F2; ML 12; AL N; BD/37.

The noise of the shriekers and the sounds of the giant locusts scuttling about attract the attention of three giant crab spiders that live on the roof of the cave. These creatures arrive in 2-12 rounds and attack immediately.

Giant crab spiders (3): AC 7; HD 2*; hp 14, 8 ($\times 2$); MV 120'(40'), no webs; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1-8 plus poison; Save F1; ML 7; AL N; BD/38. Victims bitten by a crab spider must Save vs. Poison at +2 or die in 1-4 turns. Crab spiders have a chameleonlike ability to blend in with their surroundings and surprise on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6. These horrible creatures have been living off the giant

locusts. They are always hungry, aggressive, and more than willing to vary their diet by adding an occasional side order of adventurer.

The shriekers must be passed both entering and exiting the cave. Thus, the PCs may avoid the shriekers upon first entering the cave, only to set them off on their way out. The PCs should receive experience points for only those shriekers actually causing trouble. If the PCs pointlessly hunt down and destroy every shrieker in the cave, they receive no points for such actions.

B. Pool. This murky pool of water is about 50' in diameter and 4'-6' deep throughout. There is a small 10' \times 15' island of rock in the center. The pool is occupied by a giant toad that attacks anyone standing on the shore or entering the water.

Giant toad: AC 7; HD 2 + 2; hp 12; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 2-5; Save F1; ML 6; AL N; ER/56. Unless the PCs have already destroyed the crab spiders at area A, the splashing and noise caused by fighting the giant toad will attract the spiders' attention. They arrive and attack in 2-12 rounds.

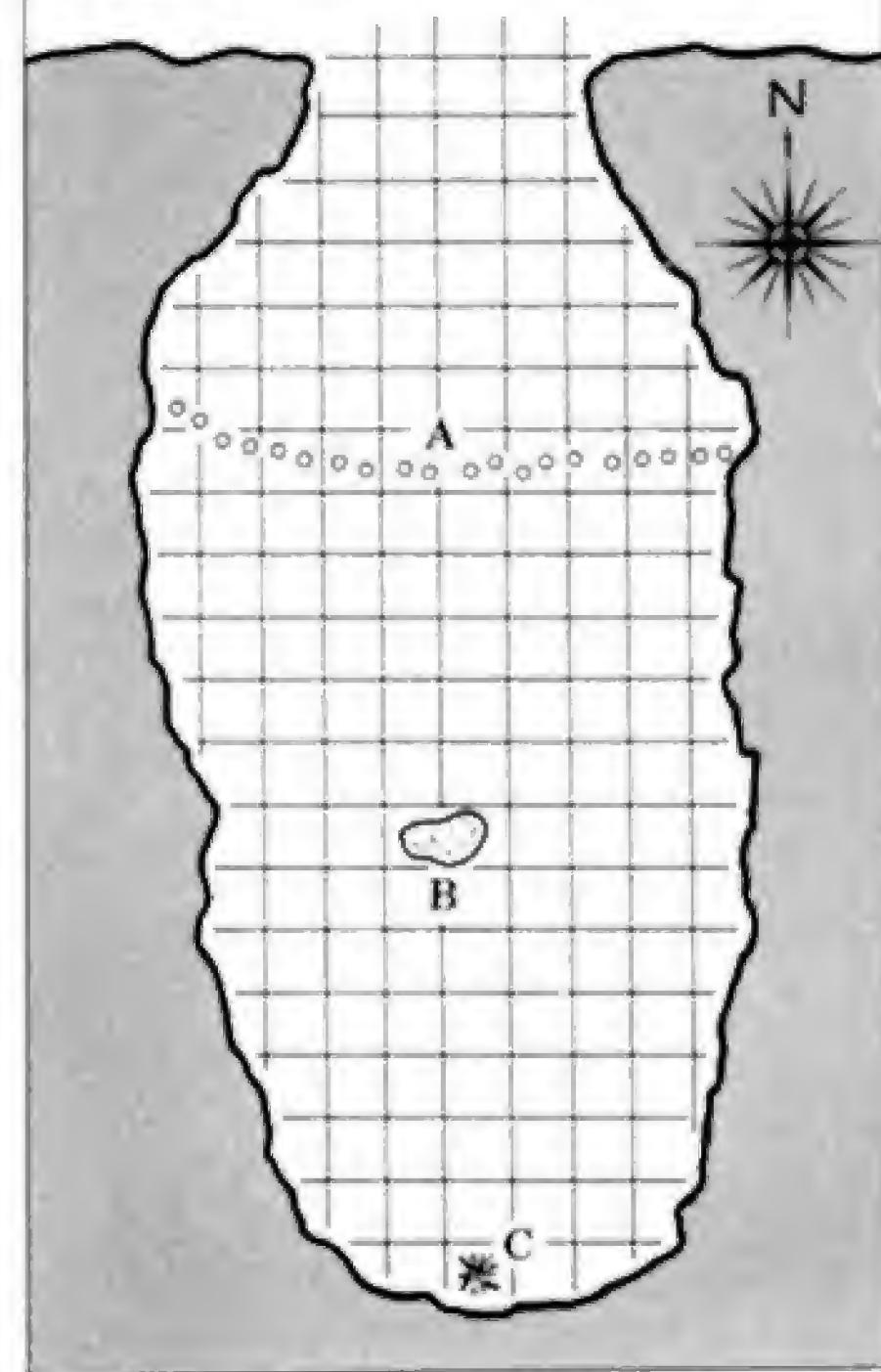
Anyone standing on the shore of the pool with a torch or better light source is able to see that there is some sort of debris or rubbish scattered about on the tiny island. The PCs are unable to tell exactly what the rubbish is until they cross the murky water to examine it. Any PC examining the rubbish immediately realizes that part of the remains are those of a giant locust, and has a cumulative 20% chance per round of searching to discover that part of the remains are those of a lizard man (a foot, part of the tail, the skull, etc.).

C. Ashes. In the very back of the cave are the remains of a huge bonfire. The PCs can see a large pile of ashes and several half-burned branches and logs. It is obviously the remains of a large fire, the smoke of which drove the giant locusts from their cave. The bonfire was built on a large sandy area of the floor. PCs examining the sandy area for tracks find the footprints of lizard men in abundance. Once these tracks have been found, the PCs should begin to wonder why lizard men are using giant locusts to attack the vineyards.

If the PCs return to Thrand's stead with this information, Thrand pays

THE CAVE

1 square = 50'



them the 200 gp bounty and asks the party to stay on for a few more days while he discusses matters with the defense league.

If the PCs were unable to get far enough into the cave to discover the tracks of the lizard men, they may try again. Neither Thrand nor his acolytes will assist the PCs, since they must defend their own stead.

Into Great Marsh

Thrand calls a meeting of the defense league for the following evening. Either Thrand or the PCs can report their findings from the cave at this meeting. The defense league members agree that there is some connection between the lizard men and the giant locusts, but no one will venture an opinion on what the connection might be. Thrand (or the PCs, if they think of it) points out that lizard men are not intelligent enough to think of deliberately using the giant locusts to attack the farmsteads. This opens up the possibility that some more sinister intelligence is behind the giant locust and lizard man attacks.

The defense league would like to wrap



things up quickly and wants to resolve the situation itself. Under no circumstances do the farmers want to call on one of the local jarls for protection. They are acutely aware of the old Northman saying "Jarls are quick to send their men, but slow to take them back again." The old saying refers to the fact that once a jarl has used his men to protect an area, he usually considers that area annexed and part of his jarldom. The league, therefore, posts a 1,000 gp reward for the destruction of the lizard men and another 500 gp for information concerning who or what is behind the attacks.

If the PCs offer to search for the lizard men, Thrand and other defense league members advise them not to take off into the marsh looking for trouble. The cleric tells the PCs to take the old abandoned spur road that once connected Whiteheart with the Marsh Road in the west. He mentions that no one knows the current condition of the bridge (area 4) and the shelter (area 5) marked on the map. The PCs will have to discover for themselves whether these structures still stand. The cleric leaves the PCs with the comforting thought that the

spur road and shelter were abandoned because they proved too costly and dangerous to maintain.

1. The Marsh Road Spur. Everyone knows where the spur road starts, for it is almost impossible to miss. The road entrance is marked with two tall stone columns. They bear no marks or carvings; they are simple, rough-hewn stone pillars that lean toward one another and are covered with lichens.

This old trail was an attempt to build a side road from the Marsh Road to Whiteheart. It heads due west into the marsh until it eventually joins the Marsh Road. The road proved too expensive to defend and maintain and was eventually abandoned. The PCs will discover and lose this trail time and time again as it disappears into bogs and mires, then reappears on firmer ground. If the DM wishes to play this out, give a 50% chance per eight-mile hex traveled through that the road is lost, with another 50% chance of finding it again per hour thereafter.

2. The Little Hill. This hill is the only true dry ground along the route of the

old road. It is crowned by a small circle of trees and is an easy landmark to spot by those attempting to use the old road. Examination of the hill area reveals old charcoal rings of long-dead campfires, bits and pieces of rotted leather, sections of old rope, and other rubbish denoting one or two very old campsites. The hill is no more than a pleasant dry spot surrounded by the marsh.

The area around the hill is the hunting ground of two giant leeches that will be attracted to the hill by the noise of the party and the ground vibrations caused when the party moves about. The leeches will not attack so long as the party remains on the dry ground of the hill. If any PC attempts to leave the hill and reenter the marsh, the giant leeches attack immediately.

Giant leeches (2): AC 7; HD 6; hp 26, 21; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1-6; Save F3; ML 10; AL N; ER/52. Once a leech scores a hit, it attaches to its victim and continues to suck blood for 1-6 hp damage per round. Leeches are not particular about their meals, and the party's horses, mules, or other warm-blooded pack animals (or NPCs) are just as likely to be attacked as the PCs.

3. Lizard Man Camp. This section of the road passes through dense, tall reeds. These large cattails grow heavily along each side of what is left of the road. The weeds block the view of what is beyond: a camp of 16 lizard men just off the north side of the road. Anyone attempting to pass down the road or near the camp is ambushed by these lizard men. If the PCs state they are prepared for an ambush or are alert to the possibility of an ambush in this area, they are surprised by the lizard men only on a 1 on 1d6. If the PCs make no such preparations, they are surprised on 1-3 on 1d6.

Lizard men (16): AC 5; HD 2 + 1; hp 10 each; MV 60'(20'), swimming 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type + 1; Save F2; ML 12; AL N; BD/33; large clubs, spears.

The lizard men use the simple attack method of half their number rushing directly at a party while the other half comes up behind to cut off retreat. If the PCs run, there is nowhere to go but deeper into the marsh. If the PCs are defeated and any are captured alive, they are taken to the lizard men's camp to be the "guests of honor" at a horrible feast.

If the PCs defeat the lizard men and find the creatures' camp in the tall reeds, they find evidence that at least one such feast has taken place recently. In the camp are many well-gnawed bones of obvious humanoid origin. At the edge of the camp is the rubbish heap of the lizard men. This trash includes old turtle shells, snake heads, fish bones, bird beaks, etc., all such things that even lizard men find inedible. Mixed in with this trash are the belongings, clothing, and boots of the victims. By searching through the lizard men's garbage, the PC's can find a suit of *leather armor +1*; a jewelled sheath for a dagger (worth 25 gp); a leather purse containing 15 gp in assorted copper, silver, and electrum pieces; and a silver brooch (worth 40 gp). The jewelled sheath and the silver brooch are so encrusted with grime that the PCs will have to clean them before discovering their value.

4. Dead Man's Bridge. This old wooden bridge is built of logs and rough-hewn planks. Time and nature have not been kind to the structure; it has a weatherbeaten look but is still very sturdy. The bridge crosses the Wyden, deep, a swift, deep stream that runs through Great Marsh. There is no ford for many miles up- or downstream. The bridge is blocked at each end by a large wagon and is guarded by 12 zombies.

In the final days of the road, before it was completely abandoned, brigands took control of the bridge. These brigands would either attack travelers using the bridge, extract a toll from them, or leave them alone, depending on the appearance and number of warriors present. The zombies are the remnant of that band of brigands. A magic-user among the brigands created the zombies from fallen comrades and victims to aid in the defense of the bridge. The magic-user and the remaining live brigands were eventually overwhelmed and captured by the lizard men of Great Marsh. The lizard men, preferring only live captives for their feasts, left the zombies where they were and have never bothered with them.

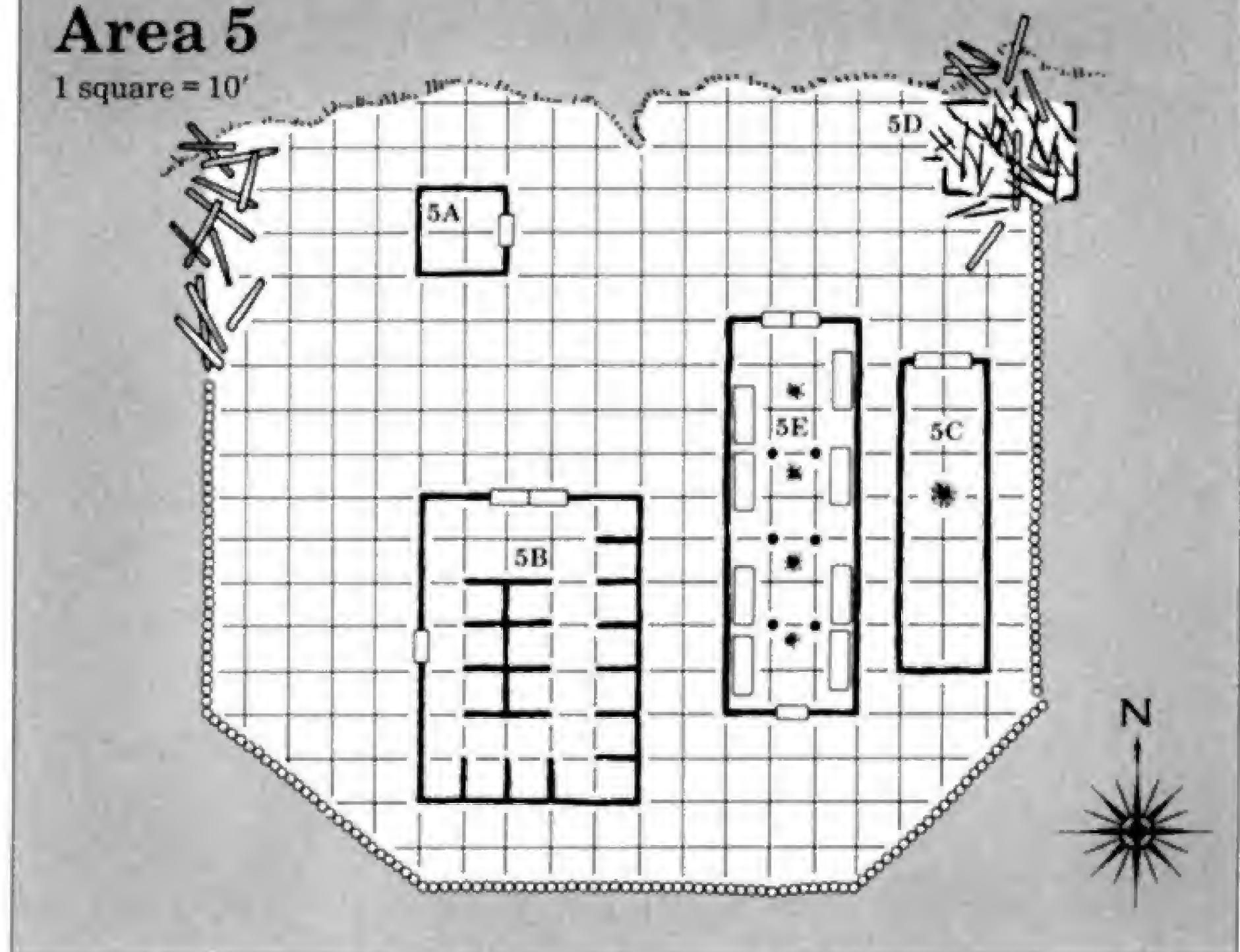
The zombies are there still, following their last orders to defend the bridge. If the PCs attempt to search or move the wagons blocking the bridge or attempt to cross the bridge in any manner, the zombies immediately attack.

Zombies (12): AC 8; HD 2; hp 9 each;

THE SHELTER COMPOUND

Area 5

1 square = 10'



MV 90'(30'); #AT 1 claw or weapon; Dmg 1-8 or by weapon type; MV 90'(30'); Save F1; ML 12; AL C; BD/39.

Searching the wagons reveals that they once held some sort of foodstuff (possibly flour or corn meal) in four large casks per wagon. Whatever it was, it has long since spoiled to a putrid green-black muck. In addition, the PCs can find scattered about in the wagons six silver-tipped arrows, one ornately carved wooden scroll tube (empty, worth 10 gp), and one tooled-leather scroll tube (worth 15 gp) containing a scroll with a *hold portal* spell. This loot is all that remains after the last battle of the brigands with the lizard men. Weather and time have also taken their toll on the wagons. They are worthless, being warped and rickety from their long days and nights in the open.

5. The Shelter Compound. These old buildings are the remnant of a well-fortified compound with a strong timber palisade. After being abandoned and unattended for years, the entire northern side of the palisade, including the gate and gate tower, has collapsed into the marsh. The buildings of the com-

pound have been ransacked time and again by various swamp dwellers. Rhungold the Trickster has recently taken up residence here and uses the compound as his home.

5A. Toolshed. This building was the toolshed for the shelter. There are several empty shelves on the southern wall, and the other walls and even the back of the door have pegs and hooks for hanging tools and utensils. In the center of the room is a pile of junk and refuse. This rubbish heap contains bits and pieces of metal; broken handles from rakes, hoes, and other tools; warped and broken boards; and rotten bits of rope. It also hides a nest of giant centipedes. If the PCs attack the giant centipedes, the noise attracts the attention of the lizard men in area 5B. If the PCs have not previously encountered these lizard men, the creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds to investigate.

Giant centipedes (11): AC 9; HD 1/2; hp 2 each; MV 60'(20'); #AT 1 bite; Dmg poison; Save NM; ML 7; AL N; BD/28. Anyone bitten by one of the centipedes must Save vs. Poison or become violently ill for 10 days.



5B. Barn. This large building was used to stable horses and other draft animals and to store hay and fodder. Lizard men serving Rhungold have moved into the building and made it their home. The horse stalls serve as separate sleeping areas for the lizard men. If the PCs enter the barn, they are attacked immediately by 10 lizard men (hp 10 each, see statistics at area 3) and their shaman. If the PCs defeat the lizard men and search the barn, they can find a cache of 20 spears and 10 clubs, which they may sell at standard prices upon their return to the vale.

Lizard man shaman: AC 5; C4; hp 16; MV 60'(20'), swimming 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1; Save C4; ML 12; AL N; BD/33, MD/21; club, spear; spells: *cause light wounds, darkness, hold person*. The lizard man shaman should be treated like any other 4th-level cleric. For more information on nonhuman spell-casters, see the *Master DM's Book*, pages 21-22.

5C. Small House. This is a bare, empty building. Any sleeping benches that were in the building have been removed, and all that remains to denote

that this was once sleeping quarters is a large fire pit. If the PCs carefully examine the fire pit, they may notice that there is an unusual amount of dirt mixed in with the ashes. If they dig through the ashes they find nothing, but if they dig into the fire pit itself, they find a chest buried in the dirt under the ashes. Rhungold keeps his treasure stored in this chest, which is locked and trapped with a poison needle. The needle's poison is not deadly, as Rhungold wants to interrogate any person who tampers with his treasure before he kills him. The poison merely paralyzes the victim for 1-6 hours; a Saving Throw vs. Poison reduces its effect to 1-6 turns. The treasure in the chest is 300 gp in various coins (mostly silver pieces); a ruby ring (worth 50 gp); three gems (worth 50 gp, 25 gp, and 10 gp); a potion of *treasure finding*; and five *quarrels +1*. Buried under the coins in the chest is a bone scroll tube inlaid with silver (worth 100 gp). The tube contains a scroll of *protection from elementals*.

5D. Collapsed Building. When the palisade fell, it apparently took this building with it. There is nothing left here but a jumbled pile of lumber that hides nothing of interest.

Four robber flies make this junk pile their home and attack anyone disturbing it. The noise of any battle with the robber flies attracts the attention of the lizard men in area 5B, if they have not already been encountered by the PCs. They arrive to investigate in 2d6 rounds.

Robber flies (4): AC 6, HD 2, hp 9 each; MV 90'(30'), flying 180'(60'); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1-8; Save F1; ML 8; AL N; BD/36.

5E. Main House. This building was the main hall for the compound. There are several sleeping benches along the western and eastern walls, and the floor is paved with large flagstones. Rhungold's spell book is under the southernmost of the eastern benches. He has made a small, dry cubbyhole under a broken flagstone and placed his spell book in it. Each PC searching the main house has a 1-in-6 chance of noticing that the flagstone is slightly askew. In addition to the spells Rhungold has memorized, the book contains the following spells: *read magic, ventriloquism, web, infravision*.

Down the center of the room are four small fire pits for cooking and heating. These are flanked by six large wooden pillars. Rhungold has made this entire building his private quarters. He sleeps on the eastern benches and stores blankets and clothing on the western benches along with a supply of food, cooking utensils, water, and wineskins. A large amount of wood, mostly old lumber scavenged from the other buildings of the compound, is stacked under the western benches.

Rhungold the Trickster: AC 7; MU7; hp 19; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; Save MU7; ML 9; AL C; I 16; Ch 16; *ring of protection* +2, *dagger* +1, potion of *invisibility*; spells: *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep*, *invisibility*, *wizard lock*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *polymorph self*.

Rhungold's treachery and trickery caused him to be exiled from the Court of Cnute in Zeaburg. The Kingdom of Ostland has no bounty for Rhungold; the nobles simply want him out of Ostland. What he does outside that kingdom is of no concern to them. If the PCs capture Rhungold and attempt to return him to Ostland, they will be told to take him back to where they found him, for he is not welcome in Ostland and neither are the PCs as long as they accompany him.

Rhungold's double-dealings (see "Rhungold and His Plans") are not based on greed, but rather on the sheer joy he gets from cheating and tricking people. He especially enjoys creating a great deal of emotional distress. However, his high Charisma often leads people to give him the benefit of the doubt; so far, no one has removed his head from his shoulders.

In an attempt to accomplish step one of his plan, Rhungold used a *polymorph self* spell to change into a black dragon. In this form he confronted a tribe of lizard men in Great Marsh, killed some of their warriors, and claimed rulership over the tribe. The lizard men serve Rhungold out of fear, believing him to be a real dragon.

Rhungold (in black dragon form): AC 7; HD as MU7; hp 19; MV 90'(30'), flying 240'(80'); #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/2-20; Save MU7; ML 9; AL C. Rhungold is unable to cast any spells while in a *polymorphed* form. The lizard men have never seen Rhungold in anything other than dragon form; he always *polymorphs* while in the main house and out

of sight of the lizard men. He can exit and enter the main house in average-size dragon form through the great double doors at the northern end of the building.

Under no circumstances will Rhungold help the lizard men fight the PCs. Rhungold's strategy is to remain hidden in the main house until one side or the other wins the battle. If the lizard men win, he has nothing to worry about. If the PCs win, Rhungold will use his *invisibility* spell or potion of *invisibility* to evade the adventurers as long as possible. If the PCs do not discover Rhungold's spell book or the treasure buried in the small house (area 5C), he will not show himself at all.

If the PCs destroy the lizard men but are unable to find Rhungold, he begins to attack the Vales in dragon form. Lizard men are not the brightest creatures in the world and tend to take things at face value. However, even inexperienced adventurers know dragons have a breath weapon. As Rhungold does not gain one when he *polymorphs*, the PCs should realize that there is something odd about the dragon.

If the PCs do discover and take either the spell book, the treasure, or both, Rhungold attacks them from the best cover possible, probably around the corner of one of the buildings (-1 to the PCs' to-hit rolls) but within spell range. He quickly casts *magic missile* and *lightning bolt* spells at the nearest PCs, then immediately *polymorphs* himself into a black dragon and attacks in that form.

When Rhungold is in black dragon form, PCs in combat with him should not attempt to subdue him or strike for subduing damage. As Rhungold is not a real dragon, he cannot be subdued; the PCs merely waste their time and do no damage to Rhungold. If the PCs can reduce him to 8 hp or less, he will surrender. If Rhungold surrenders or is captured, he tells the PCs nothing about his plans. He claims to be a simple brigand who is using the lizard men as his henchmen. The PCs or the defense league can discover the truth through either *ESP* or a *charm person* spell.

Rhungold will attempt to fight in dragon form until he recovers his treasure, spell book, or both. Once he recovers his property, he immediately flies away. If Rhungold escapes, he will not return. The DM has the option of using him again in some future adventure. In

such a case, he remembers the PCs and certainly holds a grudge against them.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs succeed in destroying the threat of Rhungold and the lizard men, the defense league will pay them the bounty in full. If Rhungold is captured or surrenders, Thrand, using his *medallion of ESP*, interrogates him. If the PCs destroy the lizard men but are unable to capture Rhungold, the defense league pays them the 1,000-gp bounty for the lizard men but not the 500 gp for their leader.

If the PCs are unable to destroy Rhungold and the lizard men, the adventurers may make a second attempt using a band of defense league fighters for help. The DM must decide on the exact number of fighters accompanying the PCs and their rank (elite, typical, or both; see "Vale Random Encounters" for complete defense league fighter details). If the PCs use the defense league for help, the bounty is reduced by half, and the defense league claims half of any treasure found. In any event, if Rhungold escapes but the PCs destroy his lair or cause him trouble, they will have made an enemy in the Northern Kingdoms. Rhungold will neither forgive nor forget the PCs. If Rhungold has been captured, he is no longer of concern to the PCs unless he escapes.

If the PCs are unable to resolve any of the adventure but still wish to remain in the Vales, they may become leaders in the Vineyard Vales Defense League. They can help defend Thrand's Stead or other vineyards against the lizard men. They may act as escort for caravans or help train defense league fighters. The maximum amount paid for such aid by the defense league will be 100 gp per party (not per PC) per month. However, the PCs may keep all arms, armor, equipment, magical items, and treasure they can capture.

Vale Random Encounters

While there is no treasure to be gained in the following encounters, the PCs may strip prisoners or fallen lizard men of their arms and sell these at standard prices (see the *Expert Rulebook*, page 19). In addition, each lizard man has personal belongings, coins, or jewelry worth approximately 5 gp (copper wrist bands, decorative tooled leather arm bands, small silver neck chains, etc.).

When defense league, lizard men, or Whiteheart mercenaries are encountered, use the following statistics and details:

Vineyard Vales Defense League

The defense league is made up of ill-trained and poorly armed farmers. It has no leader, and all decisions are made by a committee of the stead owners. Each owner or his emissary may voice his opinion or cast a vote on anything brought before the committee. The defense league is not a well-organized military machine but is able to field small bands of warriors from the steads and farms of the Vales.

Elite defense league fighter: AC 6; F1; hp 5 each; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save F1; ML 7; AL L; leather armor, shield, short sword, hand axe.

Typical defense league fighter: AC 8; zero-level human; hp 3 each; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save NM; ML 7; AL L; shield, dagger, club.

Lizard Men

Lizard man fighters are simple tribal warriors and shamans. They have no idea what Rhungold is up to; they are simply doing as they are told. The lizard men fighters do not greatly value strategy and tactics, preferring headlong charges into the enemy's ranks. In battle, they adopt an "every (lizard) man for himself" attitude.

Lizard man shaman: AC 5; C2; hp 12; MV 60'(20'); #AT 1 spell or weapon; Dmg by weapon type +1 or spell; Save C2; ML 12; AL N; BD/33, MD/21; club; spell: *cause light wounds*.

Typical lizard man fighter: AC 5; HD 2 + 1; hp 10; MV 60'(20', swimming 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type +1; Save F2; ML 12; AL N; BD/33; club, spear.

Whiteheart Mercenaries

The Whiteheart mercenaries are a mixed bag of battle-wise veterans, bar-room brawlers, and downright brigands. The city of Whiteheart lies west of Great Marsh and north of Gnollheim. Constant skirmishing with lizard men and gnolls has honed the battle skills of the mercenaries and taught them the value of thinking about a battle before engaging in it. Like all Northmen, they greatly value personal strength and courage, but they also have a much better grasp of strategy and tactics than

the average Northman. They use this knowledge to best advantage and tend to avoid charging headlong into an enemy.

Elite Whiteheart mercenary: AC 4; F4; hp 18; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save F4; ML 10; AL L; chain mail, shield, war hammer, hand axe.

Typical Whiteheart mercenary: AC 6; F2; hp 9; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save F2; ML 10; AL L; leather armor, shield, mace, hand axe.

Berserkers (optional)

For some unexplained reason, Northmen are particularly susceptible to the berserk battle rage that overcomes some warriors in combat. Some sages suspect it has something to do with the Northmen's Immortals, Odin and Thor, while others point to purely racial factors. Whatever the reason, berserkers are more common among the northern kingdoms than elsewhere. When using the following encounters, the DM may change 20% (round all fractions down) of the typical fighters to berserkers (see BD/27) once they are engaged in a battle. For this adventure, use the statistics given for a typical defense league or Whiteheart mercenary but add +1 to hit points and +2 to hit rolls.

A berserker engages only enemy fighters so long as there are enemies to fight. Once all enemies have been vanquished, however, the berserker keeps on fighting, turning on PCs, friends, and allies in a blind battle-rage. Once the berserk fury has taken hold, it will not pass as long as the fighter is engaged in combat (with either friend or enemy). If the berserk fighter can be subdued (by using a *sleep* or *hold person* spell, by knocking him unconscious, or by whatever means the DM deems possible), the berserk fury passes in 1-4 turns, after which the fighter returns to normal, though he will go berserk again the next time he is engaged in combat. Elite fighters do not go berserk, due to the self-discipline and training they have acquired.

Battle Guidelines

In large battles involving many warriors, the fighting is often confused and chaotic. Because of this confusion, the PCs must be careful in using missile fire or spells on jumbled and shifting targets. The DM should roll percentile

dice for any hit that a PC scores by a missile weapon (spells such as *magic missile* and *hold person* automatically strike their desired targets). There is a 50% chance of hitting an enemy or ally; a roll of 1-50 means the hit was scored on a friendly fighter or allied creature, while a roll of 51-100 hits an enemy fighter or monster. Spell-casters must also be careful when using area-effect spells such as *sleep* or *bless*, as friends may be accidentally harmed or enemies accidentally. For convenience, the DM can use the 50% rule: In any confused jumble of people, 50% are friends and 50% are enemies. Thus, if a *sleep* spell is cast and puts four fighters to sleep, two are friendly fighters and two are enemies. If an odd number is affected, the DM may choose or roll randomly to determine if the one left over is a friend or an enemy.

The DM may roll randomly for the following encounters or choose an encounter as appropriate. Each encounter should be used only once, but if the DM wishes, encounters 1 and 6 can be reworked and used over again.

1. Renegade Lizard Men. Sixteen lizard men (hp 10 each) are attacking five defense league fighters (one elite, hp 5; four typical, hp 3 each) on a scouting mission. The lizard men are not trying to kill the scouts but are attempting to drive them westward into the marsh. The lizard men feel that the marsh offers much more opportunity for sport with the scouts than dry land. If PCs attack the reptiles, they stand and fight to the last lizard man. The lizard men are renegades, deserters from Rhungold's forces in Great Marsh (see "Into Great Marsh"). They deserted several weeks ago and have been living in the marsh ever since. If any are captured and interrogated, they attempt to trade information on the location of Rhungold's lair in Great Marsh for their freedom. If Rhungold's lair has already been found and attacked, these lizard men will not know of it.

2. Defending the Defense League. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you approach a small hill, you hear the sounds of battle: men shouting, horses whinnying, the clash of

sword against shield. These sounds rise on the wind and come from the far side of the hill. To see what is happening, you must go directly over the hill, as the heavy brush on either side of it is virtually impassable. Once atop the hill, you see 10 defense league fighters attempting to repel the onslaught of 20 lizard man warriors. The lizard men have their backs to the hill and cannot see you.

If the PCs charge immediately, the 20 lizard men (one shaman, hp 12; 19 typical, hp 10 each) are surprised and disorganized. The PCs can attack once more before the reptiles recover enough to defend themselves. In addition, the PCs automatically win initiative for the next two combat sequences. If the PCs issue a challenge before attacking, the lizard men will not negotiate but will simply divide their forces and send half against the PCs and half against the 10 defense league fighters (four elite, hp 5 each; six typical, hp 3 each). In this case, initiative is rolled normally.

3. The Burning Stead. For this encounter, the DM may use the map above or the fold-out map and 3-D cardboard buildings of Ottkel's stead supplied with GAZ 7 *The Northern Reaches*. A DM who owns module B10 *Night's Dark Terror* can use the fold-out map of Sukiskyn and the counters supplied with that module. In the latter two cases, the DM need only note the placement of fires in this encounter to use the maps.

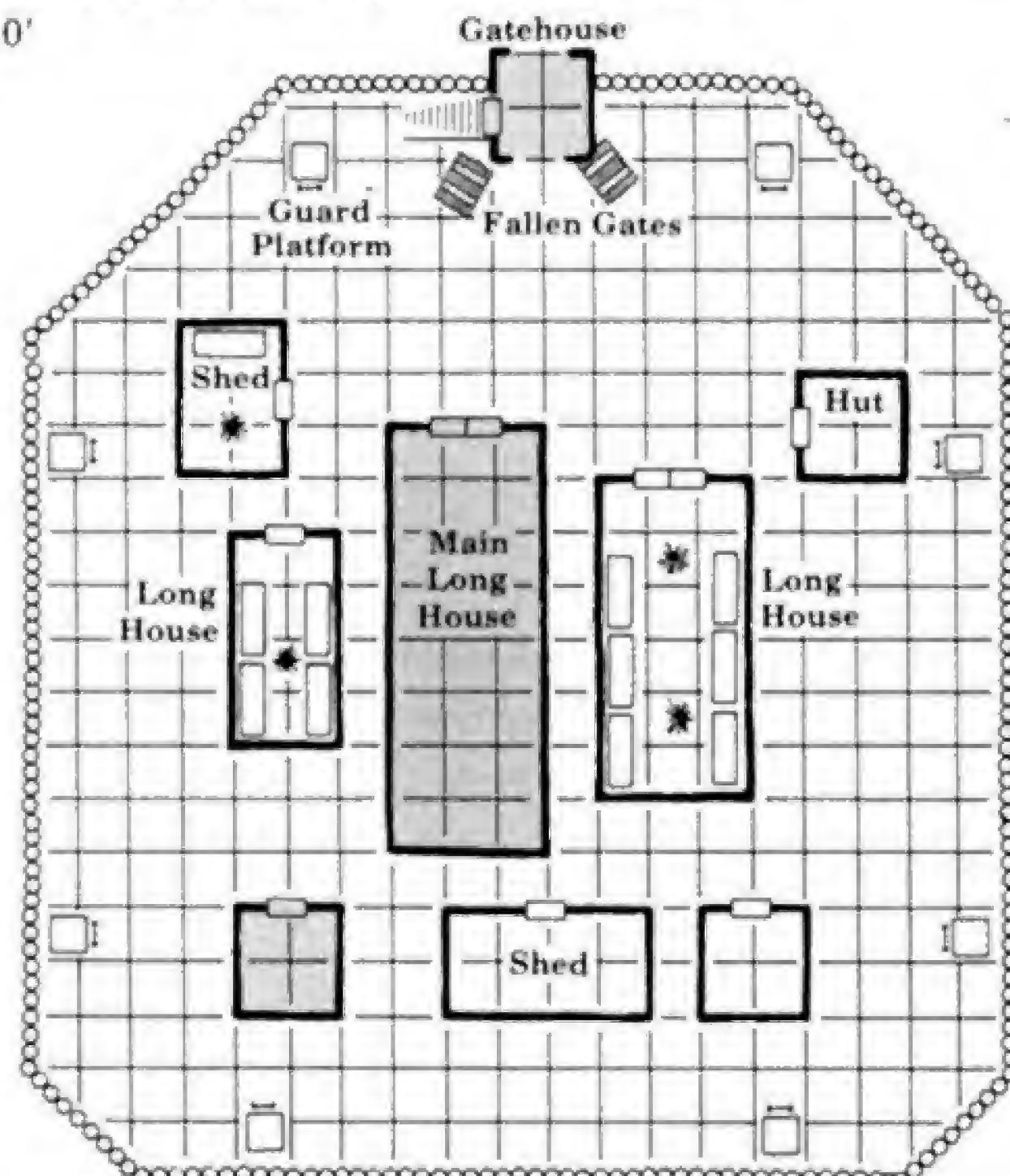
Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You have stopped to rest your horses and eat a meal. The day is hazy, but rising over one hill in the distance is what looks like smoke. As you watch, it becomes thicker and stronger until it can only be the billowing smoke from a large fire. As you ride toward it to investigate, you begin to hear the sounds of battle growing louder. You top a small rise and can clearly see a burning stead. The gates are down and the gate tower, main house, and a shed are burning furiously. A battle still rages among the flames.

The stead is defended by 12 defense league fighters (four elite, hp 5 each;

THE BURNING STEAD

1 square = 10'



eight typical, hp 3 each). The attackers are 15 lizard men (two shamans, hp 12 each; 13 typical, hp 10 each). The PCs will have a difficult time reaching the battle because of the blazing gate tower, the only entrance and exit to the stead. This also means that the combatants within the walls are unable to retreat. Any PCs attempting to pass through the fire without magical protection, such as a *resist fire* spell or *ring of fire resistance*, suffer 2-8 hp damage from the flames (the DM may also include further penalties, such as clothes catching fire for additional damage, scrolls burning and becoming useless, or loss of Dexterity or Charisma due to burns).

The easiest way for the PCs to enter the burning compound is for a thief character to climb the wall (normal chance of success) and throw down a rope for the others. One attempt can be made for each wall of the stead. If the party does not contain a thief, other characters may attempt to climb the walls using the guidelines supplied on page 22 of the *Expert Rulebook*. As the defenders and attackers of the stead are busy hacking and slashing at each other among the burning buildings, no one

will notice the PCs until they attack. There is fighting throughout the burning stead, so the DM may place encounters anywhere within its walls.

4. Rescuing Whiteheart Mercenaries. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You hear the sounds of battle as you follow a well-tended wagon road through a small tree-shrouded glen. Around a bend in the trail you come upon a Whiteheart wagon train under attack by lizard men raiders. There are seven wagons stopped in a line on the road, with the wagons about 20' apart. A total of 50 Whiteheart mercenaries and lizard men are locked in deadly hand-to-hand combat in, on, under, and around the wagons. From the look of the battle, the Whiteheart wagoneers are getting the worst of it.

The wagons are defended by 23 Whiteheart mercenaries (23 typical, hp 9 each) and contain foodstuffs and arms to resupply the mercenary bands defending the Vales. They are being attacked

by a force of 27 lizard men (two shamans, hp 12 each; 25 typical, hp 10 each). If the PCs charge into battle immediately, they automatically have initiative for their first attack. If they challenge the lizard men, nothing happens or changes. The fighters are too preoccupied with their combat to disengage or worry about the PCs. If the PCs issue a challenge, however, roll initiative normally.

5. Locusts and Lizard Men. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You are riding down an old cart track when you hear the sounds of battle. As you round a thick stand of trees, you see a battle between defense league fighters and lizard men. Apparently, the defense league fighters are trying to get into the vineyard just beyond, but the lizard men have formed a skirmish line and are preventing anyone from entering. Looking into the vineyard, you see that it is being attacked by several giant locusts. The defense league members are cursing the lizard men and screaming bloody murder, but they are unable to get at the locusts. If you want to drive the locusts from the vineyard, you are going to have to deal with the lizard men yourselves.

There are 12 defense league fighters (two elite, hp 5 each; 10 typical, hp 3 each) trying to break through a line of 25 lizard men (two shamans, hp 14 each; 23 typical, hp 10 each). In the vineyard are 15 giant locusts (hp 9 each). The locusts are very hungry and fight with a morale of 8 rather than their usual 5.

If the PCs challenge the lizard men or engage in combat with them, the reptiles are forced to give up their game with the defense league fighters and allow them to enter the vineyard. If the PCs attack the lizard men, several things happen at once. The defense league men attack the giant locusts, and the locusts begin jumping. There is a 50% chance per giant locust that it becomes confused and jumps into the fight between the PCs and the lizard men. If so, a victim (either a PC or a lizard man) is determined randomly and a hit roll is made. If the giant locust hits, the victim is battered for 1-4 hp. Any victim hit by a locust cannot attack

in that round because he is surprised and off balance.

It will take the defense league fighters 30 rounds to drive the locusts from the vineyard. If the PCs defeat the lizard men before this, they may join help the fighters. If the PCs are still engaged with the lizard men after the fighters have either killed or driven the locusts away, the fighters will help the PCs fight the lizard men. Of the NPC fighters, 1-4 will have suffered 1-6 hp damage in the fight with the locusts.

6. Ambush. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You are following a narrow track through a heavily thicketed area and are unable to see more than 2'-3' through the heavy brush.

Sixteen lizard men (one shaman, hp 12; 15 typical, hp 10 each) have been lying in wait for some unfortunate passers-by to enter this thicket. If the PCs attempt to pass through, they are ambushed immediately. If the adventurers state they are preparing for an ambush in the thicket, the lizard men surprise them on a roll of 1 on 1d6. If the PCs make no such preparations, they are surprised on a 1-3 on 1d6. The lizard men waiting in ambush are out to kill anyone entering the thicket. They attack from both sides and attempt to block the track ahead and behind the party.

7. Captives. The PCs come across 20 lizard men (20 typical, hp 10 each) returning from a raid. The lizard men have four human captives and are returning to the marsh for a feast. The captives are bound and cannot fight until they are released. If the PCs attack, the lizard men divide their forces, with eight lizard men trying to escape with the captives while the other 12 act as a rear guard to prevent anyone from attempting a rescue. If the rear guard is destroyed, the first eight lizard men abandon the captives and high-tail it as fast as they can for Great Marsh.

Captives (4): AC 9; zero-level humans; hp 3 each; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save NM; ML 5; AL L; unarmored and unarmed. If freed, the captives are grateful but can offer no reward to the PCs because their stead was burned when they were captured.

8. Refugees in Need. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You are riding down an old cart track when you hear the sound of a large number of people weeping and wailing. Ahead and off to the right you see a number of peasants being harassed and bullied by a group of fighters. The fighters are going through the peasant's goods and possessions and taking what they please.

The peasants are 30 refugees fleeing the fighting in the Vales. They are being robbed by 15 Whiteheart mercenaries (two elite, hp 18 each; 13 typical, hp 9 each) who have decided that there is more money to be made in robbing the Vales than in protecting them. The mercenaries are so busy searching through and arguing over the peasant's pitiful belongings that, if the PCs attack immediately, they automatically surprise the mercenaries and win initiative for the next two rounds. If the PCs challenge the mercenaries before attacking, the men from Whiteheart collect themselves and prepare for battle. In this case, normal initiative rolls are made.

If any of these renegade mercenaries are captured, they can be turned over to the defense league. The renegades will be treated as common brigands, i.e., lashed, imprisoned, used as forced labor, etc. Once a group of mercenaries turns to robbery, the other Whiteheart mercenaries will have nothing to do with them and do not care what becomes of such renegades. If any PCs are captured by the brigands, they will be stripped of all equipment, arms, armor, magical items, and anything else of value, then released along with the peasants.

Refugees (30): AC 9; zero-level humans; hp 3 each; MV 120'(40'); #AT nil; Dmg nil; Save NM; ML 5; AL L; unarmed and unarmored. Ω

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Hello.

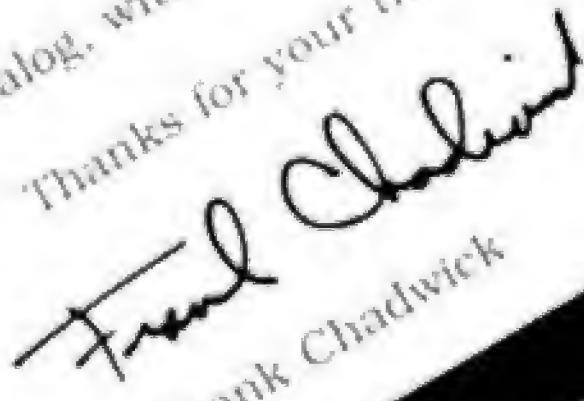
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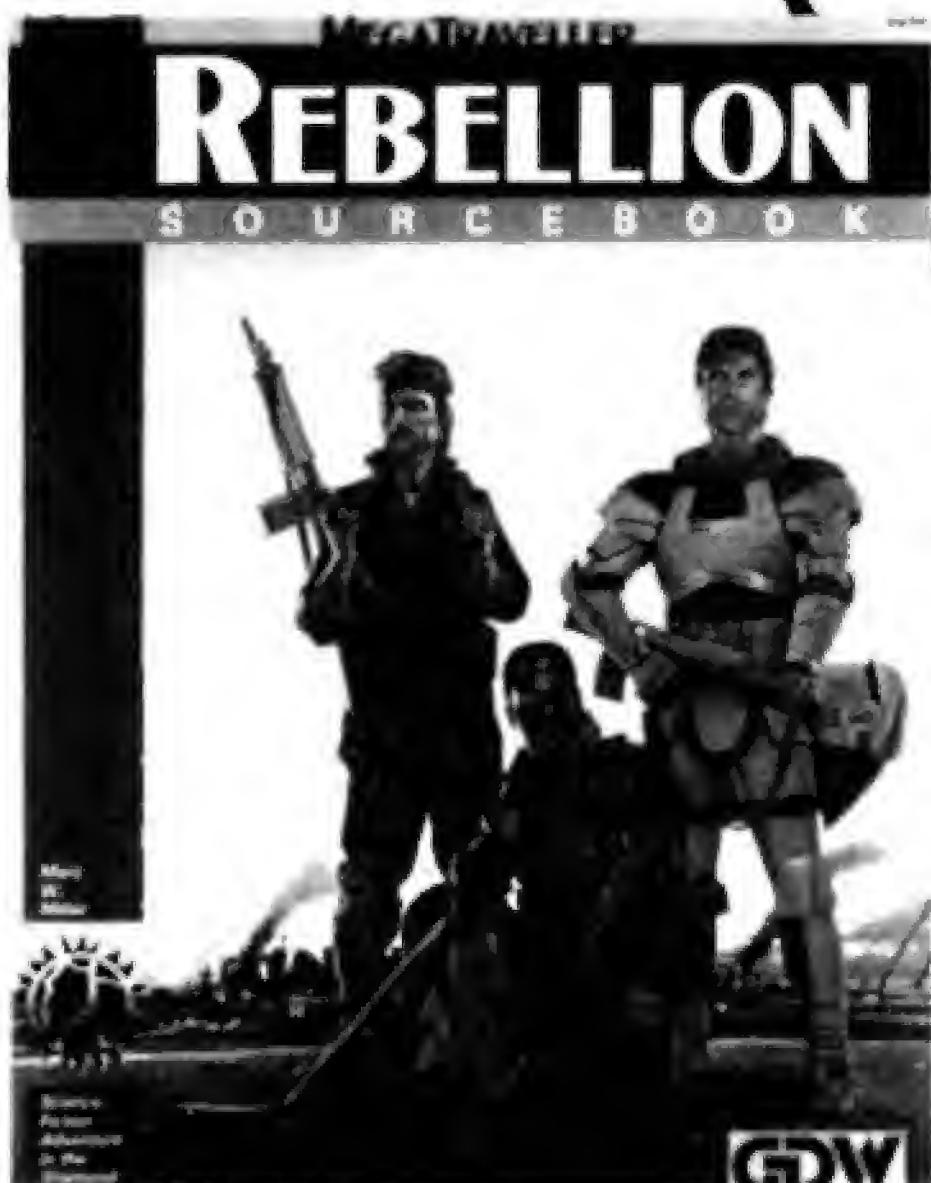
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Thanks for your time.


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THE PYRAMID OF JENKEL

BY WILLIE WALSH

In this town, nothing goes like clockwork.

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

This adventure is Willie's eighth offering to readers of DUNGEON® Adventures. Willie writes to tell us: "I had a terrific response from readers when I had my address published back in issue #18. I got one letter—from five miles away. Thanks folks! Excuse me while I sulk . . ."

"The Pyramid of Jenkel" is an AD&D® module designed for a party of six player characters of levels 8-10 (about 54 total levels). The alignment of the PCs should not be evil and should tend toward good. The group should be equipped with magical weapons of +1 or better enchantment.

Adventure Background

In an area that is now largely wilderness, there was once a great city named Juncert. Its people were both wise and enlightened, and it was known throughout the ancient world for its learned sages, its innovative architects, and its inventive engineers.

Perhaps the city was envied by some jealous god, or perhaps it was founded on unhallowed ground, for its splendor and might vanished abruptly in one great catastrophe, now only dimly remembered in tales 500 years old. The stories tell of a great rending of the earth, with gouts of flame and darkness reaching to the skies. Cracks and fissures of unplumbed depths were the downfall of turrets and spires. Houses and workshops, palaces and temples—all were obliterated as the heaving soil closed over the buildings as if the city had never been.

Only a few dignitaries and officials escaped Juncert's destruction, and only because they were outside the city when it fell. Returning from a meeting with foreigners who were eager to share in the lore of the fabled city, the officials beheld only a waste of new-turned earth where once their homes had stood.

Time erased most of the learning that had made Juncert famous. A hamlet grew up on the site of the ancient city. Its name, Jenkel, was thought to be derived from the original place name.

Modern thinking among the youngest of sages casts doubt on the factual existence of Juncert, claiming it to be a fanciful, romantic tale thought up to enoble the cottagers and herdsmen of Jenkel, who claim to be descendants of the survivors of the catastrophe. But

those sages call this claim merely allegorical. They explain it as a folk memory of an immigration of people into the area from some far-off place, which would also explain certain practices still peculiar to the village of Jenkel.

Perhaps, the sages say, the people fled some major earthquake, which became the "downfall of Juncert." Certainly, the Jenkelians' devotion to the Ceremonies of Spring, which attempt to placate divine anger, is inordinately pious. In Jenkel, these ceremonies are held not only at the vernal equinox, but are repeated a total of seven times throughout the year, with only minor variations!

The Jenkelians have erected an unusual pyramidal structure in the center of their village to serve as a focus for their worship. Sacred libations of oils are offered by their priest, and the farmers offer plant and animal sacrifices here in an attempt to "keep time with nature."

But for all their devotion to their unique religion and their legend of fallen grandeur, the villagers are just too far off the beaten track to attract much notice. Jenkel is just a dot on the edge of some maps. On most, it doesn't appear at all.

For the Dungeon Master

It sometimes happens that established opinion is wide of the mark on certain issues, and the village of Jenkel serves to illustrate this well.

Juncert was truly a fine and wonderful city, but it was unfortunately sited. It was not, as skeptics claim, a mere figment of the peasants' imaginations—it actually existed. To try to understand its downfall, we must look to certain magicks that are rare but not unknown in the world at large.

It is not unusual for magicians to open magical portals to other planes for reasons best known to themselves. These *gates* are fashioned by powerful spells and are opened only after the most intensive study and precautions. However, like most magic, such *gates* are also a naturally occurring phenomenon.

In the case of Juncert, time and the movement of the multiverse collaborated in an ecliptic movement of planes to a juncture that opened beneath the city. The Prime Material plane, plane of elemental Fire, and plane of Tarterus focused for an instant on one spot. Two *gates* opened at once beneath the city.

Some parts of Juncert were sucked through to destruction in the plane of Fire; some were transported, almost intact, to the horrors of Tarterus; and some were merely swallowed by the very earth on which they stood. In the next instant, the *gates* refocused or shrank, but the city was no more.

Whether this natural focusing of cosmic forces is a singular phenomenon or if it might have been the downfall of other cultures and cities in the past cannot be known. Most of what little remains of Juncert in the Prime Material plane is inaccessible unless the layers of earth and rock are stripped away to find again the broken and shattered walls and streets below.

However, our adventure still touches on the events of 500 years ago, for though the sages have made a mistake in dismissing Juncert as merely legendary, it is not their only mistake. Their other oversight was in assuming that the Jenkelians built their pyramidal shrine. They didn't. One night, only a year ago, the ground beneath the hamlet trembled and the structure . . . appeared!

The Pyramid of Jenkel

Let us return to the *gates* beneath the fabled city. They open, and Juncert is destroyed. Some parts of the city are forever gone; others are hidden beneath the earth. The clock tower of Juncert subsides into the ground, and the fissure closes over its pitched roof. It stands in a sealed cavern for many years, sometimes experiencing sharp rises in temperature as the vestige of the *gate* to the plane of Fire waxes and wanes.

Perhaps the forces that caused the coincidence of the twin *gates*' original catastrophic opening will one day let them shrink forever, as the Prime Material plane heals itself of these unwanted portals. But on the 500th anniversary of the descent of the clock tower into the earth, just a year ago, fate or the gods had another trick to play.

Abruptly, the fiery portal spewed out black smoke and noxious fumes, sending out tendrils of force through the plane of Fire seeking someone—or something—to fit some obscure plan. Or perhaps it was mere chance that suddenly carried creatures from the infernal plane into the grotto. Whatever the motive, three creatures stepped through

to survey their surroundings in bewilderment. These lava mephits were confused. One moment they were going about their business; the next, they found themselves in this gloomy cave without a clue as to what to do or what

Abhir

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any land

FREQUENCY: Rare

ORGANIZATION: Small group or solitary

ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any

DIET: Carnivore

INTELLIGENCE: High

TREASURE: G

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil

NO. APPEARING: 1-3 or 1-6

ARMOR CLASS: -7/-5

MOVEMENT: 12

HIT DICE: 7+7

THAC0: 13

NO. OF ATTACKS: 7

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8 (constriction) and by weapon type (×6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

SIZE: L (7' tall, 30' long)

MORALE: 15

XP VALUE: 10,000 (includes use of magical weapons)

This wicked denizen of the outer planes has a multiarmed female torso atop the body of a great snake. When uncoiled, she can stand taller than a large man. Each of the abhir's six arms can wield a weapon (favored weapons are magical swords and battle axes). This monster can constrict her victim with her snakey tail, and can cause magical darkness in a 5' radius. She has *infravision* and other extraordinary abilities, any one of which can be used once per round: *charm person*, *teleport*, *levitate* (as an 11th-level wizard), *read languages*, *detect invisibility*, *pyrotechnics*, *polymorph self*, *project image*. The abhir can *gate* in another abhir with a 50% chance of success.

Abhirs desire the sacrifice of strong warriors, and they are constantly looking for ways to do evil deeds in service of their lords. Lower-level denizens of the outer planes greatly fear the domineering and cruel abhirs.

terrors lurked in this horrible place.

While the mephits hesitated, the ground beneath them trembled and a gout of darkness momentarily spilled out into the lesser gloom of the cave. The mephits trembled, too, as a shape formed in the black fog. It slithered and writhed horribly as it slowly moved forward. The mephits were amazed to see the serpentine form of an abhir! Perhaps this place had possibilities after all! Shrewdly, the mephits bowed down to Sefnu the abhir (see sidebar), knowing that her leadership might bring them great reward.

And Sefnu accepted their service, setting as their first task a thorough examination of the cave to which they had all been transported. They first examined the clock tower, which had risen in the disturbance until its pitched roof burst through the center of the isolated village of Jenkel above.

Quickly and silently, heedless of the barking dogs and screaming geese, the mephits scouted the village. Sefnu was pleased with their reports and promised them one of the human sacrifices she would receive from the village. The mephits cackled in anticipation, but Sefnu would not allow them to do anything . . . yet. They must wait and consolidate their position, because if Sefnu was right about the stupidity of humankind, she could do some free-lance evil and gain many souls for her lord in Tarterus. Yes, Sefnu could do very well here for a while—if she was careful!

The Ceremonies of Spring

The villagers—most of them descendants of the Clockwardens of Juncert who were attending a meeting at the time of the original catastrophe—have a strange religion. It is a mixture of nature worship and the lore of the Clockmakers that has been corrupted over the years.

The ceremony in spring began, as may be expected, as a celebration of the arrival of warmer weather. The other six ceremonies are remnants of the six windings of the great clock spring, which used to be days of celebration when Juncert was a thriving city. After hundreds of years, both types of celebration have merged. The libation of oils once given in maintenance of mechanical parts has become an element of the Jenkelians' rites to preserve the fruitfulness of the land, and "keeping time

with nature" is an amalgam of both traditions.

In this confusion, the appearance last year of a relic from days of yore left the villagers open to suggestion. Their priest, Broderick, on viewing the newly risen pyramid, declared it a shrine sent by the powers of nature as a reward for the villagers' faithful worship. In fact, the pyramid was the pitched roof of the clock tower that had been pushed up from below. In the semidarkness of the new shrine, Broderick saw the old cogs and wheels and mechanical parts, and remembered ancient stories about the knowledge of power held in lost Juncert. This power was in its engineering, but Broderick did not understand this at the time. Obviously, this shrine could help Broderick to gain more power in his community, as he would be the religious leader responsible for its maintenance.

Then, as Broderick wondered what to do, a voice came to him, seemingly from the depths of the earth. The voice told him that his village was favored by the gods, that it was chosen to rise above greater towns and even cities in prestige and fame. All Broderick had to do was follow the instructions of the "Oracle of the Pyramid," provide her with such items of sacrifice as she demanded and keep the secrets that she told him to keep. Sefnu spoke from the shrine, never revealing herself to the villagers or the priest, and they began to believe themselves potential rulers of all the lands around.

Gradually, Sefnu changed the Ceremonies of Spring (after Broderick "refreshed her memory" about them) to include more animal sacrifices and fewer offerings of grain in the first step of her plan to work up to more suitable gifts. In the meantime, she sent her mephit servants to gather more evil creatures, quietly expanding the grotto beneath the pyramid into a more useful dungeon and incorporating several other old buildings hailing from the days of Juncert. Then she felt the time was ripe for her newest instructions.

As guardians of the shrine (Sefnu related through Broderick), the villagers were in a sense all clerics of the religion, with Broderick, their leader, a sort of high priest. They should consider it an honor to be counted among the original worshipers, and it was now the villagers' responsibility to recruit more worthy people to be trained by the oracle to spread the word. But first, new-

comers must be convinced to come to Jenkel and descend the shaft below the pyramid. There the testing and initiation would take place, until one day the "acolytes" would return to share the inner mysteries of the Rites of Spring with the wider world.

But, Sefnu related, she wanted no recruits who were interested merely in religious fame. Those who were to spread the faith must be hardy souls able to defend themselves and their religion. In fact, it might be best to attract capable adventurers to Jenkel without mentioning Sefnu's religious goals. The testing of such people would then be unaffected by any preconceived ideas about the Rites of Spring.

In truth, Sefnu means for high-level adventurers to be tricked into believing that a store of hidden treasure exists below the pyramid. When they come to collect it, Sefnu will destroy them. Twelve individuals have entered the shrine and not returned. The next to be recruited are the player characters!

For the Player Characters

To involve the PCs, the DM should have them meet one of Broderick's "special messengers," either on the road or at the inn in which they are staying. Depending on how the module is being used (as a single adventure or as part of a campaign), some information regarding Jenkel may be available. The PCs may hear fragments of what the sages know about the village (see "Adventure Background"), or they may hear of it only as a "mere dot of a place" at the extreme edge of a kingdom or state.

To introduce the PCs to the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A man approaches and asks if he might join you. He looks extremely ragged and smells strongly of pigs. You are not surprised when he introduces himself as Caden, a swineherd from the village of Jenkel.

"I've got some information," he says, "that might interest you folk. I know where there's a treasure to be found, but as you can see, I'm not the type to go looking for it. Perhaps you gentlemen would like to do the job?"

Caden glances at each of you in turn. He looks the typical peasant and not one to know anything about treasure, adventuring, or taking a

bath. He pauses a moment before going on. "I don't have much money myself, but where I come from, a good lot of goods and silver is collected seven times a year and offered up at the ceremonies in our shrine. The priest throws the whole lot down a shaft beneath this shrine to keep the gods happy. But I've got my doubts about it all. I want to know where all that money is going, and why. Half of us don't have enough to eat when we pay the tithe, and I reckoned that the treasure that's collected over the years shouldn't be left there to go to waste. My family could use it to get some food into us for a change!"

"That's where you come in, if you're interested. I reckon that only a tenth of what's down there could feed five families for a year, and that's the portion I want from the deal—you keep nine-tenths of whatever's there and give the rest to me for telling you how to get to the shrine. What do you think?"

PCs using a *detect lie* spell on Caden will detect no falsehood, as he has been led to believe that successful adventurers will, among other things, return some of the collected wealth to be used to better the lives of the villagers. If the PCs ask about any protections placed at the shrine, he tells them about the wooden fence, but he doesn't know of any traps inside the shrine. If they ask who built the shrine, Caden says that he doesn't know, and of course he's telling the truth.

If asked to which god the shrine is dedicated, he appears uncertain (he wasn't coached for this question), then names a lawful-neutral deity and adds, truthfully, "But I'm not quite sure if it still is." If good-aligned PCs kick up a fuss over the apparent thievery involved in the plan, Caden stresses the supposed immorality of collecting a tithe from poor people, only to "let it go to waste by throwing it into a hole in the ground." Some PCs might be greedy enough to be swayed by such shaky arguments, but even more "moral" PCs may wish to investigate this problem more closely for themselves.

If the PCs accept Caden's terms (or at least agree to travel to the village), it should take about two days for the PCs to reach Jenkel from wherever they are.

A short Wandering Monsters table for travel to Jenkel is provided.

Caden has no qualms about staying with the adventurers to act as guide, if they insist on his doing so, but he would prefer to go on ahead because, as he puts it, "I've done my job by telling you about the money. I just want to get home now." Again, he's telling the truth.

Caden: AC 10; MV 12; zero-level human; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; AL CN; hand axe. These are typical villager statistics that can be used for all residents of Jenkel unless otherwise noted.

The Village of Jenkel

Assuming the PCs (with or without Caden) arrive, more or less intact, from their crossing of the wilderness, you may wish to display the Players' Map on page 23. Because of the detail on this

map, a Dungeon Master's map with numbered areas is also provided (see page 22). Information should be revealed only as the PCs actively seek it out.

The villagers' attitudes toward the PCs should be likely to arouse some suspicions. Some Jenkelians may prove overly friendly by wishing to touch items of clothing their guests have worn—or are wearing—with no explanations provided as to their motives. In much the same way that believers wish to touch a religious relic, these villagers wish to come into contact with the new "acolytes" before they are tested by the oracle. Of course, they'll not tell the PCs that for fear of spoiling their chances in the test.

Other villagers may shun the adventurers to avoid defiling them in some way. Such villagers might include older people—especially those incapable of producing offspring—as well as any

Wandering Monsters (Roll 1d4)

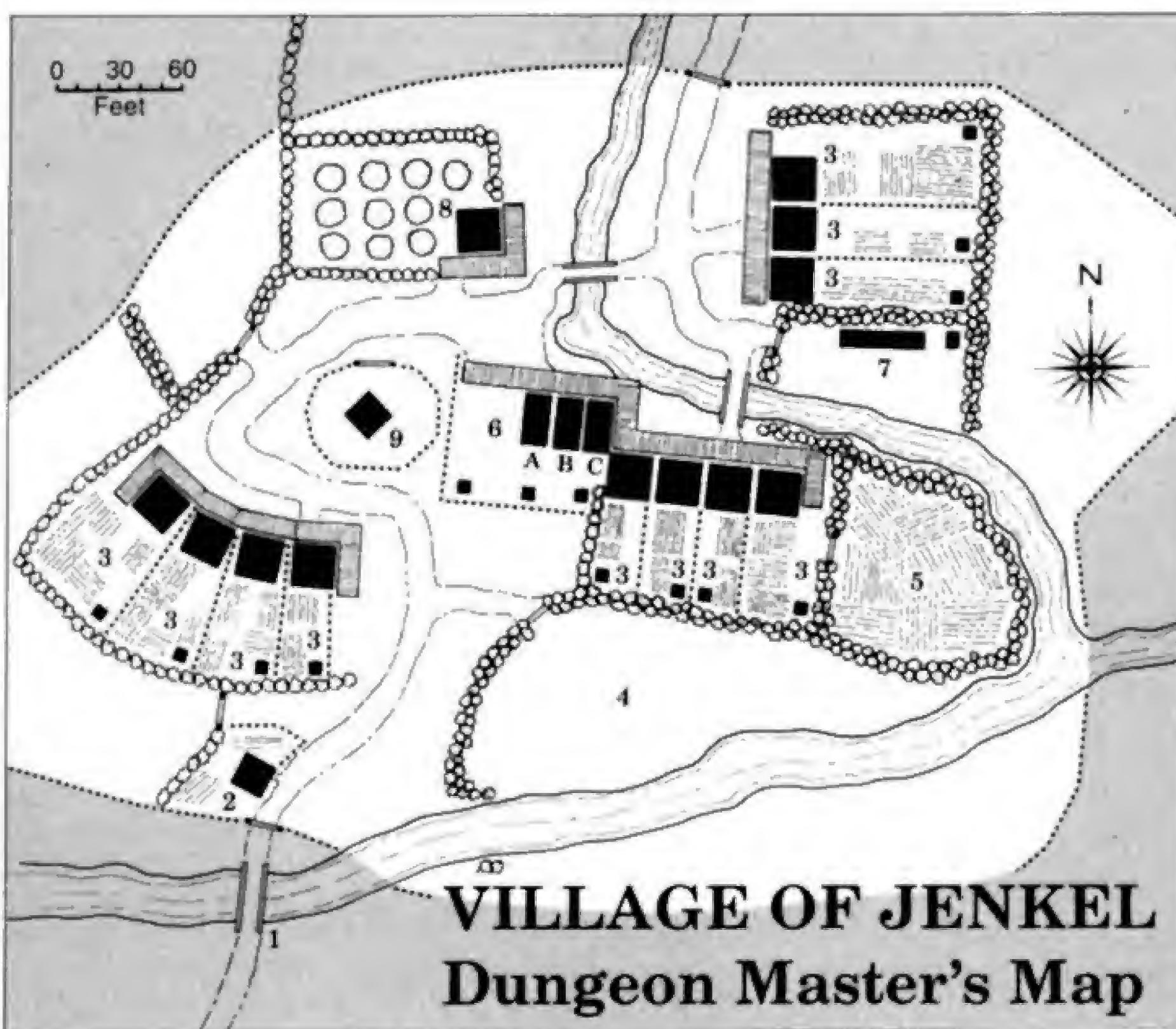
Encounter rolls may be made at dawn, noon, and dusk. A positive result is indicated by a 1 on 1d6; then roll 1d4 to select the encounter.

1: Horse: AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-3; ML 6; AL N; MC. At a distance, the party sees a medium horse, complete with saddle, bridle, and baggage, though without its rider. It is very frightened and skittish, but its loneliness makes it easy to approach, especially if the PCs have pack animals with them. The horse belonged to an adventurer named Gerwet, a victim of Sefnu since last week. Sensing danger, the horse escaped and has been wandering aimlessly since. Apart from clothing, tack, and a week's iron rations, the animal bears no valuable items. Besides its value as a clue to trouble ahead, the horse will fetch 200 gp if caught and given a good feeding and grooming. Caden hasn't seen it before, so he can truthfully deny any knowledge of its owner, whatever his suspicions.

2: Griffons (2): AC 3; MV 12, fly 30; HD 7; hp 32, 22; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; ML 12; AL N; MC. These two griffons are a mated pair just setting out to hunt. There's a 30% chance they are mere dots in the sky when encountered, and a 70% chance they are 10-100 yards from the party. In the latter case, they attack immediately.

3: Criosphinx: AC 0; MV 12 (Fl 24); HD 10; hp 52; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/3-18; ML 16; AL N; MC (sphinx). Tenohon the criosphinx migrates annually in search of treasure and victims. He has chosen to take a vacation in the area of Jenkel this season. The monster descends on the party and demands a payment of 1,000 gp per person to pass. If the PCs pay, Tenohon is true to his word and does not molest them on their journey, but he'll expect a similar toll if they come back this way and he's around. If the PCs refuse to pay, the monster attacks. If he kills a PC, he again demands the toll. If refused, he continues fighting until reduced to 10 hp or fewer, at which time he attempts to escape to safer parts.

4: Pyrolisks (4): AC 6; MV 6 (Fl 18); HD 6+2; hp 25, 16, 21, 15; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA gaze (save vs. petrification or erupt in fatal gout of flame; save for 2-13 hp damage); SD immune to fire; ML 12; AL NE; MC (cockatrice). At night, these nasty creatures are likely to be attracted to the PCs' campfire. If the die roll indicates a daytime encounter, the pyrolisks attack the PCs as trespassers on their territory. The pyrolisks attack until either the interlopers flee or they themselves are destroyed.



villagers with physical deformities or flaws. This peculiar behavior may be explained as a remnant of Jenkel's original primitive nature worship, as part of the newer religious rites, or as purely superstitious nonsense.

Naturally, Jenkelians will try to prevent the PCs from becoming aware of their intended induction in the local religion. The PCs could resort to bribery in order to gain information, but as Broderick has not given his congregation many facts about the oracle or the shrine, there's little to learn directly. The cleric is not a mine of information himself.

Some villagers have not been converted to the worship of the oracle, having their own suspicions about what happens to the adventurers who enter the pyramid. These Jenkelians drop hints that the PCs should stay away from the shrine, but such is their terror of the oracle's unknown powers (see rumor #7) that not even the dissenters will speak plainly about their fears.

But it would be unfair to allow the PCs to descend into the pyramid without some inkling that this local religion might not be as harmless as it appears

to be. The following list offers items of information, or rumor, which the adventurers may uncover as they move about the village. The DM can choose the rumors that the PCs hear as they move about in Jenkel, or he can use a roll of 1d12 to randomly determine what is heard.

1. Broderick's official title is "Warden of the Spring of Jenkel." (True. This is the full title of the former Clockwardens of Juncert, passed on to the priests of Jenkel.)

2. Formerly, the Ceremonies of Spring were held in the cleric's house. Now they're performed in the pyramid. (True. This may arouse the PCs' suspicions in relation to the length of time the Jenkelians have been using the shrine as a place of worship.)

3. At one time, Jenkel used to be a great city, and all of its people were kings. (Untrue. It was the site of a city, but the people who formerly lived here were merely better off than the current residents.)

4. Broderick's fruit trees used to bear fine fruit. Now they are no longer cared for. (True. His duties at the shrine cause

him to neglect the trees. The PCs may wonder what new duties have warranted the demise of the cleric's trees.)

5. The pyramid is hundreds of years old. (True, but the implication that it has been just as it is for hundreds of years is false; the villagers don't know that the "pyramid" is truly centuries old, and they try to steer strangers away from the knowledge that the pyramid simply appeared last year.)

6. When unbelievers fail to pay their proper respects to the shrine, the ground trembles in anger. (False. The area beneath Jenkel is still unstable from the presence of the 500-year-old interplanar gates.)

7. Spirits of fire carry away those who disobey the teachings of Broderick. (Kind of true. The mephits have had recourse to some nighttime bullying tactics against rabble rousers identified by Broderick. Though the mephits have scared some people by burning their crops—the mephits danced about in the gardens, laughing uproariously at the expressions of fright on people who saw them—they've not actually "carried off" anyone to date. Damage to the gardens has since been repaired. Broderick has seen the mephits and believes they are avenging spirits.)

8. It is important that Broderick provide the village with the proper rites to follow, so the people can keep time with nature. (False. This is part of the debased clock lore from the days of Juncert.)

9. Broderick conveys the wishes of the oracle to the people each time he conducts a major ceremony. (True. Sefnu gives him instructions that he passes on to the villagers.)

10. The cleric pretends he gets inspiration from meditating in the pyramid, but he really invents all the laws and rules himself. (False.)

11. A party of adventurers passing through the village a week back spoke of being attacked by trolls. (False. This is a cover story in case the escaped horse (see Wandering Monsters table) is discovered loose in the wilds. The party descended into the pyramid and never returned.)

12. Each time someone new passes through Jenkel, the villagers hold a welcoming ceremony. This ceremony is different from the regular Ceremonies of Spring. (True. Instead of offering oils and a token amount of grain, a fatted calf is sacrificed and cast into the shaft as a signal to expect company.)

Encounter Areas In Jenkel

1. Bridge and South Gate. The village is entered over a wooden bridge that spans a wide, shallow stream. At the far side of the bridge, a pair of wooden gates are set in an old, much-repaired palisade.

During daylight hours, the gates are kept open; travelers and villagers alike come and go as they please. At dusk, the gates are closed against the possibility of monsters or bandits. PCs arriving after the gates have been closed must attract the attention of the gatekeeper (area 2) in order to enter the village.

2. Gatekeeper's Residence. The gatekeeper, Maltron (hp 5; AL LN; see Caden's statistics), lives in this cottage. He is responsible for the much-used south gate and is paid an allowance of 15 sp per week. (The north gate is kept closed much of the time, although shouting for someone to come and open it usually gets some response—even if this is only to direct the traveler around the village to the south gate).

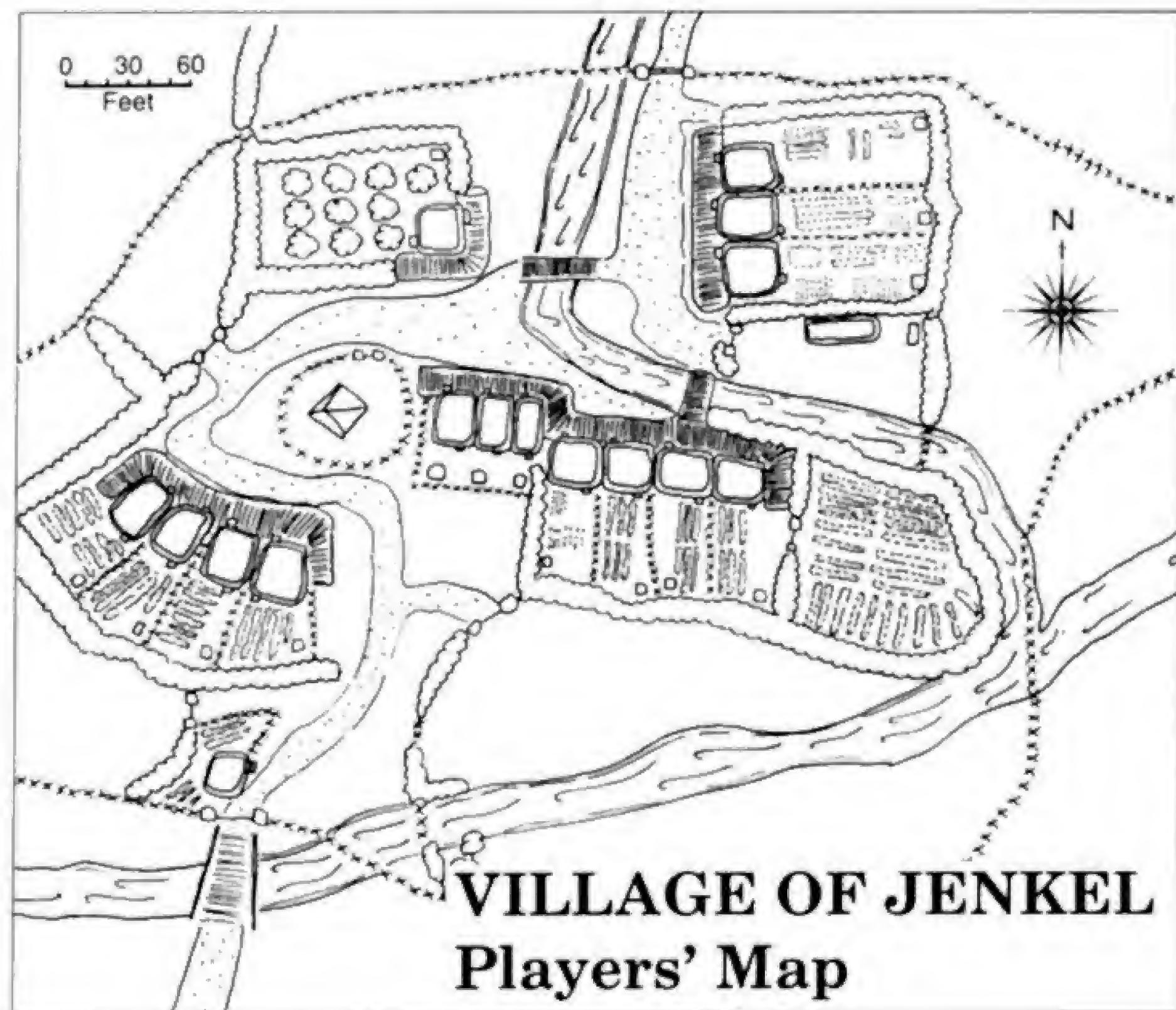
Because of his wage, Maltron can afford small luxuries. He purchases foodstuffs from the local store (area 6), so the patch of vegetables around his cottage is smaller than those of the more self-reliant villagers.

This cottage also lacks the wooden sidewalk that fronts most of the buildings in Jenkel. Maltron's cottage is built on stony ground, and little mud collects around it.

Maltron has little interest in any of the goings-on concerning the pyramid.

3. Villagers' Cottages. Each of these cottages is the residence of a family of villagers (choose one for Caden to live in). From 3-8 people share the two rooms that make up each cottage. A wooden sidewalk along the front of the building goes some way toward keeping mud from indoors. A typical cottage floor plan is shown on page 24. Each house also has an outhouse at the far end of the vegetable garden.

To supplement an infrequent diet of meat, each family grows food in the tiny plot at the rear of their cottage. These vegetable and fruit gardens provide the bulk of foodstuffs for each family. Although the villagers keep livestock, the rough ground does not yield up a crop easily, so grass is in short supply—especially on the rocky ground north of Jenkel.



An allotment system, whereby four or five families are given a 12-month free-hold on a plot of land to the east of the village center (see area 5), attempts to alleviate the hardship of subsistence farming, but life remains a struggle in this tiny outpost of humankind.

4. Village Common. This field is enclosed on the north and west by hedges, and on the south and east by the village palisade. It serves as common grazing land for those villagers who own cattle. This area is used mostly in winter, as the cows are allowed to roam freely outside the perimeter of the village at other times of the year. However, only rough grasses grow in the wilderness, so the cattle are seldom more than poor specimens of their kind.

Some few cows raised for dairying are kept within the confines of the village at all times of the year, due to their value and the need to milk them regularly. Sheep roam the wilderness at most times of the year, but these are left much to their own devices apart from such times as lambing, shearing, and slaughtering (which are considered village events).

None of the livestock found in or around Jenkel is worth more than 50% of the value found in the *Player's Handbook*, due to inadequate food and lack of care. The DM should inflate the price, though, if the PCs wish to purchase any animals for whatever reason.

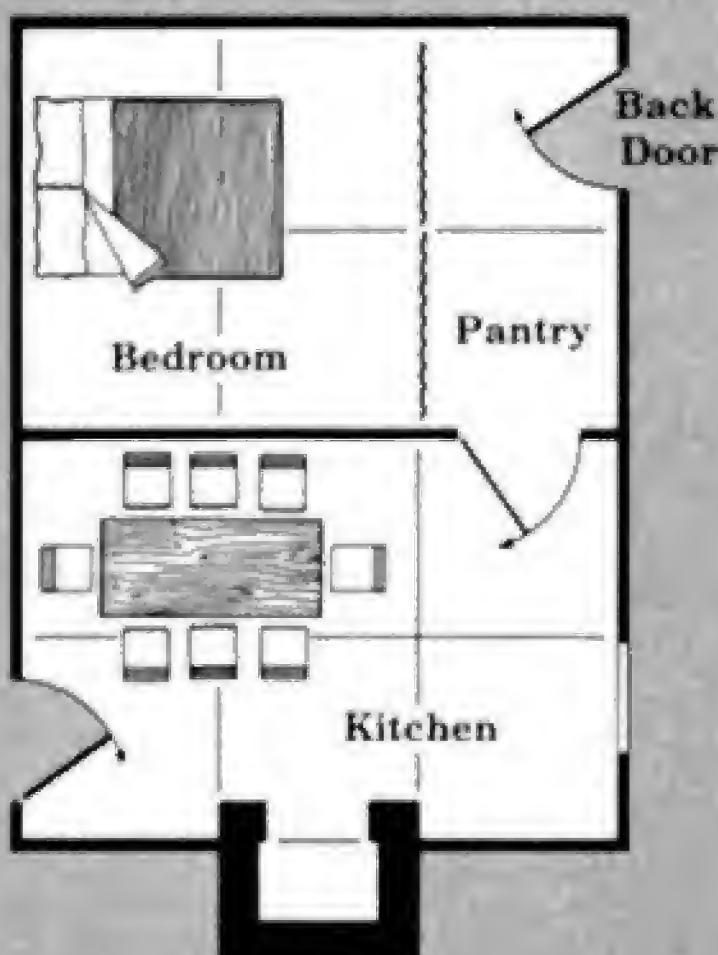
5. The Allotments. This is the space of land allotted to four or five families each year on which to grow crops. Vegetables are tilled in neat rows to supplement each family's own small garden. Necessity dictates that each allotment is as well tended as circumstances allow, despite any temptation to slacken off work near the end of the year when the allotment is due to be handed over to someone else.

The crops grown here are as spindly and pest ridden as those in any other part of the village—they're just grown on a slightly larger scale.

6. Merchant Square. What few shops there are in Jenkel cluster here near the center of the village. Few goods are bought if they can be made or grown, so the shopkeepers are as impoverished as the rest of the villagers.

TYPICAL COTTAGE

1 square = 5'



Each proprietor lives with his wife and family at the back of his shop. At the DM's option, these three shops might also have basement areas for storage.

6A. Smithy. This forge is owned and operated by a man named **Refon** (hp 7; AL LN). He makes most of the tools and repairs metal objects used in the village.

6B. Victualler's Shop. This building, which also serves as a simple tavern and inn, is owned by a man named **Feont** (hp 5; AL CN). Apart from salted meats and other foodstuffs, it stocks agricultural supplies, seed grain, remedies for both livestock and humans, and tools (made by Refon Smith, area 6A).

6C. Supply Shop. This building sells many kinds of miscellaneous equipment at 400% of book values. Its owner, **Nevant** (hp 5; AL N), is sure that passing adventurers are likely to have plenty of money, and the isolation of the village means they can hardly take their business elsewhere. The DM must use common sense in deciding what can be bought here (no canoes, magical items, or "fancy" things, for example).

7. Paddock. A long, low stable is the only building in this paddock. Draught horses and an occasional pony are kept here. A stone water trough stands in the northeast corner and is used to water the horses in the event of a spring or winter flooding of the river. At these times, the river becomes muddied and sometimes causes stomach ailments in the horses, so rainwater is collected and doled out in the trough.

8. Priest's House. This is the house traditionally set aside for Jenkel's priest. Broderick is the current custodian of the villagers' traditions, so he is counted as the leading person in the village.

Broderick: AC 9; MV 12; C4; hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 17, D 15, C 17, I 12, W 9, Ch 18; ML 11; AL LN (changing to CE); club; spells (20% chance of spell failure): *cure light wounds, command, curse, hold person, speak with animals*.

Broderick's poor wisdom makes his spell-casting sometimes go awry, but his charismatic appeal and physical appearance have maintained him in the villagers' esteem. He leads the Jenkelians in the Ceremonies of Spring and conveys to them the wishes of their "oracle."

The priest's glimpse of the mysterious machinery below the pyramid holds out hope for more revelations in the future, so he carries out the wishes of Sefnu (whom he believes to be a true oracle) in the hope of gaining personal power and prosperity for the village. He has never actually seen the abhir, though it is by no means certain that seeing the monster would turn him against her current plans.

Broderick, once a priest of a local lawful-neutral god, now prays to the deity to whom Sefnu owes allegiance and for whom she is collecting souls on the Prime Material plane. Because of this, he gains spells in the normal way without apparent penalty. The DM may choose some chaotic-evil deity or outer-planar lord to be the source of Broderick's continued clerichood, but the priest has been tricked into using some lesser (and not widely known) name when praying to this deity and so is unaware of the exact nature of this new god. Broderick, who is basically selfish and immature, wants glory and importance—and he wants it now. He shows a certain lack of concern over the fate of adventurers who enter the

shrine, thinking only that he has finally become someone worthy of renown.

Broderick used to keep fruit trees at the rear of his house. These provided good quality fruit, which he distributed to the villagers at festival times as a special treat. Now, as his attention has been diverted by the pyramid, these trees have grown wild and no longer produce a good crop. The cleric obtains his food through a special tithe to which all the villagers contribute. He doesn't grow any food of his own, following a long tradition for priests in Jenkel.

In welcoming the PCs to the village, Broderick is formal and polite. The PCs might notice that he fails to enquire about their business or their proposed length of stay in Jenkel. This, of course, is because he doesn't expect them to be leaving. He believes they will either be slain if they fail the test, or they will stay on for training if they pass it.

9. The Pyramid. Jenkel's pyramidal shrine is surrounded by a recently erected fence of 5'-tall sharpened wooden stakes, put up to protect the shrine (or so Broderick said). Entrance may be gained through a locked gate to the north; only Broderick has a key, but the lock may be picked by a thief with normal chance of success. At times of ceremonies, shuttered windows in the fence are opened to allow spectators to view the enclosure. The upper 10' of the pyramid is visible over the 5'-high fence, showing clearly that the pyramid's apex points west at an incline of about 18° from the perpendicular.

Welcome to Jenkel

The ceremony welcoming the PCs to Jenkel takes place on the first evening of the party's stay in the village. Broderick leads the villagers in the rites, which are summarized at rumor 12 on page 22. Sefnu likes to impoverish the villagers even further by requiring this ceremony for all newcomers. It also allows adventurers a chance to suspect something is amiss—cautious adventurers provide better sport for the abhir. To describe the ceremony to the PCs (who may attend or not without pressure or hindrance from the villagers), the DM may read the following boxed description. The PCs may either be openly present or hiding and spying on the ceremony.

As the villagers gather for the ceremony at the pyramid, you see that it is only the cleric, Broderick, who is permitted to actually go inside the structure itself. In fact, the two attendants holding a young calf by the neck look quite nervous about being inside the enclosure at all.

Special shuttered windows in the fence are opened to allow spectators to view the proceedings from outside the enclosure. Most of the village is watching when Broderick walks to the center of the arena and clears his throat to speak.

"People of Jenkel! We are blessed to have visitors in our humble village. Let their strength be ours in the time that they stay here! Let us keep faith with those who have been here before us, and who kept in time with nature. Let our hands be true, that the aspects of our faces remain forever clear. And let us pass on to that world where the tolling of bells will accompany us in our work and at our rest."

"In keeping faith with our fathers, whose knowledge was of keys to things forgotten, we offer this sacrifice to our shrine, that our guests may pass safely on their way."

The cleric then produces a knife, which an attendant uses to slit the throat of the struggling calf. The ceremony ends with the cleric dragging the sacrifice into the shrine on his own, where he remains for several minutes before reappearing. If any PCs are known to be present, the villagers approach them to shake hands and say goodnight as they leave. If Caden is still with the PCs at this point, he tells them that now it's up to them to deliver on the exploration of the shrine. He clears off with no other word.

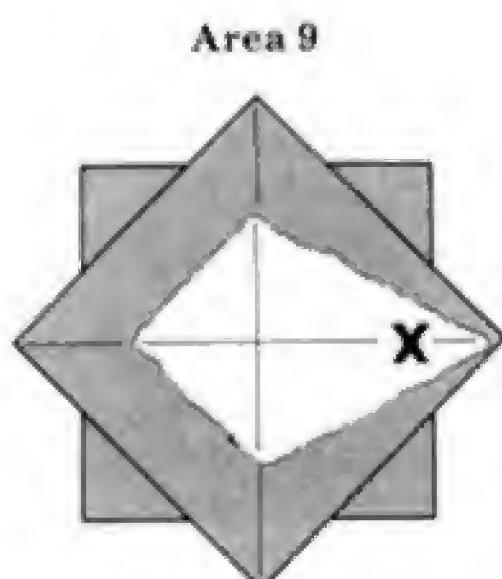
The Shrine

The PCs may wish to do their treasure hunting after Broderick locks the front gate and retires for the night. The following numbered descriptions refer to areas on the Pyramid and Buried Tower map.

9. Roof Structure ("The Pyramid"). Entrance through the hide coverings is gained by a flap, marked X on the map. When the PCs enter the pyramid, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

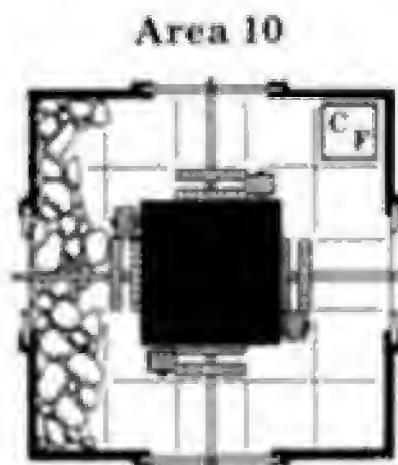
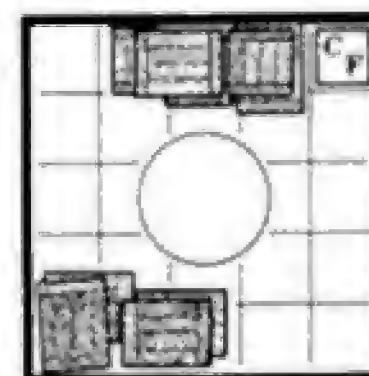
PYRAMID AND BURIED TOWER

1 square = 5'

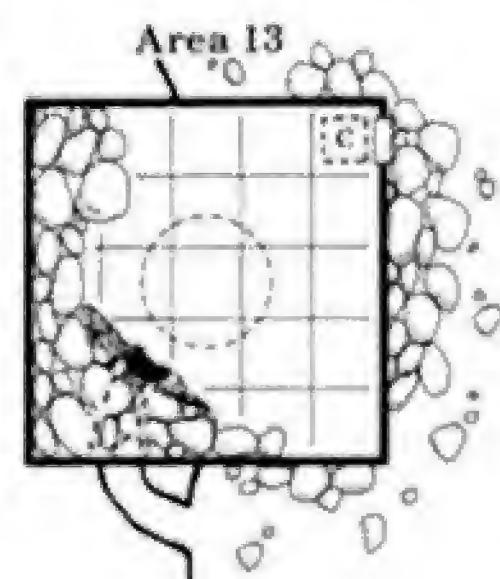


Area 9

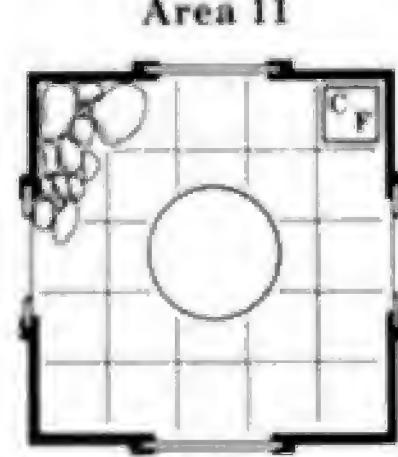
Area 12



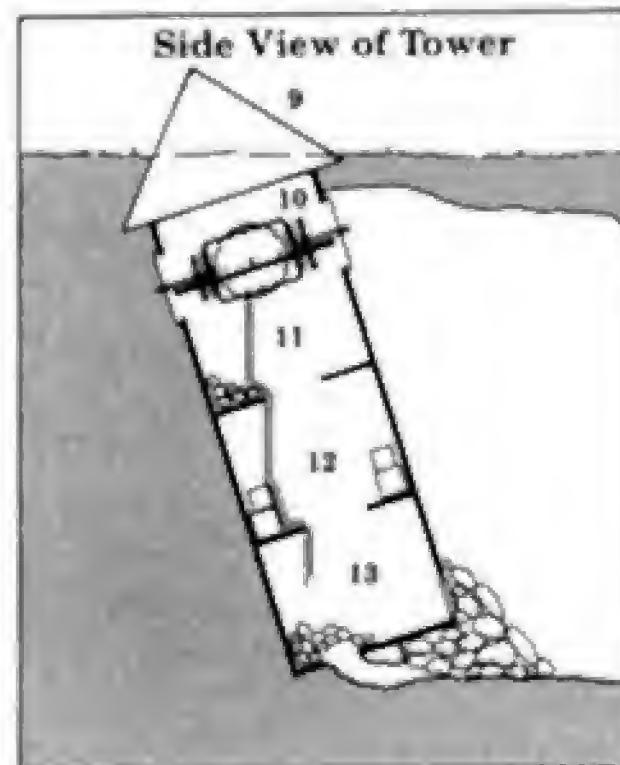
Area 10



Area 13



Area 11



Passing through the flap of leather covering the entrance, you discover a wooden floor that slopes sharply downward to the west. It would seem that the pyramid was not intentionally built at such a radical angle, as the slope of the floor suggests that the structure once stood upright.

Looking at the roof from inside the shrine, you see that it is almost 10' below ground level at its western end. Obviously there has been some major subsidence here.

The floor is littered with scraps of old seed and pieces of straw, as well as fresh blood. Odd bits of twigs stick out from the timbers of the roof structure. Apart from these features, the inside of the pyramid seems unadorned. There is neither statuary nor furniture of any kind.

The PCs should remember that Broderick pulled the bleeding body of the sacrificial calf in here after the ceremony. However, the calf is nowhere to be seen.



The odd bits of twigs sticking out of the rafters are actually petrified birds' nests, well over 500 years old. The nests were made by ordinary birds when the original tower was on the surface. The timbers are petrified, too, from the building's long stay underground. They refuse to burn, though the outer skin of hides may smoulder with some encouragement.

A search reveals a trapdoor in the floor. It drops without stairs or ladder to an area 10' below. The PCs may use any sensible means to drop the 10' to this lower room; otherwise, damage from a fall is 1-6 hp.

10. Upper Clockworks.

This square room has a sloped floor similar to the one above, and it is 10' below the pyramid. Large spiked metal wheels of various sizes protrude from each of the four walls. They are set on axles connected to a 10' cube of metal in the center of the floor.

Against the west wall, where the floor is lowest, there is a line of rub-

ble and rubbish. The north, south, and east walls each have one low, semicircular window. The east window is smashed. All is still and quiet.

The spiked wheels are the various wheels and cogs that once kept the machinery of the clocks going in this tower. The semicircular windows are the top halves of the clock faces. The vertical drop through the east window is about 60'. PCs may just be able to make out the cavern in which the tower rests if they have infravision extending to this limit or have some means of shining a light to this range.

The 10' cube is a box containing the clock's mainspring and winding mechanism, and the ropes by which the clock was rewound seven times a year in the original "Ceremonies of Spring." If anyone takes the lid off this container (after first oiling and removing several dozen large bolts), there is a 75% chance the inner works have been protected enough to still be supple. If so, each person in the room takes 4d6 hp damage from the explosion of the uncoiling mainspring released from its holder

(save vs. breath weapon for half damage: the PC manages to duck, or the spring uncoils with less force in the direction of the PC). The noise from the uncoiling spring has a 95% chance of alerting the ettins at area 12.

Lying atop the pile of rubble is a ladder made from hollow iron tubes hastily welded together. A PC who rolls his Intelligence or less on 1d20 may decide the ladder is here to get up to the shrine above, as Broderick wouldn't throw the ladder into the room from above if he wanted to make use of it again himself. Some of the rungs are shiny, so the ladder seems recently used and not a relic from the past (the ettins in area 12 have used it, and Sefnu, in *polymorphed* form, has been out scouting the village).

11. Lower Clockworks and Shaft.

Twenty feet below the trapdoor is another floor. More of the metal wheels and the central cube protrude through the ceiling into this space. In the center of the floor is a 10'-diameter hole that leads down into darkness.

Two old ropes hang from the center of the ceiling, where they enter and are attached within the metal cube. These ropes extend downward through the hole in the floor. A long ladder lies on the sloping floor near the pile of rubble against the west wall.

It seems this ladder, too, is well used and has been left here to allow someone to climb up to the floor above with a minimum of fuss.

The PCs may be able to reach out over the 10'-diameter hole and grab one of the suspended ropes that allowed the Clockwardens to wind the great clock from the ground floor of the building. If a PC makes a percentile roll of 01-34, the rope he reaches for is strong and handy, and with one successful dexterity check he may safely climb down. But if the percentile roll is 35-60, the rope is brittle with age and useless for loads heavier than five pounds. In either case, if the PC falls, he takes 3-18 hp damage. Anyone falling to the floor below has a 95% chance of alerting the ettins at area 12. Like all other monsters in this dungeon, these creatures were rounded up by the abhir to be her slaves.

The wheels and the central cube are the lower parts of the clockworks. The

four faces of the clocks are also partially visible, high up on each wall. The west and east faces are smashed. Bloodstains near the central shaft show where the sacrifice was tossed by the abhir's servants. The rubble near the west wall, though less substantial than that in the room above, shows signs of exploration by previous adventurers. A ripped backpack (caught in the trapdoor by its owner), some torches, and a stashed waterskin (its contents now evaporated) are all there are to be found. Large, humanoid footprints in the dust suggest something big has been in the room of late. A quiet examination and a glance into area 12, below, might reveal some likely candidates.

12. Clockwarden's Quarters. If the ettins are awakened by noise from above, they hide in the crates. Adjust the boxed description accordingly.

This room is empty of furnishings except for a couple of crates that have been piled together in much the same way as children might create some structure with odd bits of wood. Loud snores come from the nearest of the two structures, and what looks like a large purple leg can be seen sticking out of a crate near the west wall.

The center of the floor is broken by a 10'-diameter shaft that falls away into a darkness disturbed by flickers of reddish light.

Sefnu considered it amusing to house Jim-Jem and Mick-Rick, two ettins, in these comfortable surroundings so that they could soften up adventurers before they meet the abhir. The ettins' low intelligence has made them afraid of Sefnu despite their greater physical might. They brought the head of the slaughtered calf to the abhir in return for keeping the carcass as food.

Jim-Jem and Mick-Rick (ettins): AC 3; MV 12; HD 10; hp 70, 64; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/3-18 with clubs (1-10/2-12 with fists); SD surprised only on a 1; ML 14; AL CE; MC.

The ettins have a quantity of treasure from the booty found in the ruins. This treasure is useful as bait to whet explorers' appetites for further progress. It amounts to four silver bowls (worth 400 gp each), 180 gp, and 506 sp.

Another long ladder lies on the floor. At the central shaft, another ladder leads down to area 13.

13. Ground Floor.

The ladder drops into a room much like the one above but filled with debris. There are noticeable cracks in all four walls. In the southeast corner is a large pile of rock and dirt through which a tunnel leading downward has been cleared. Through the opening to this tunnel, a red light flickers fitfully.

Debris falling from above came to rest in this lowest level. There is still a closed door in the east wall, which is completely blocked with rubble. Access to area 14 is gained through the floor of this room instead of by the door. Because the tower is tilted, the blocked door is 15' above the level of the cave floor.

Refer to the map of Sefnu's Lair for the following descriptions. Note the change of scale on this map.

14. Large Grotto.

The tower leans against the westernmost wall of a large grotto. On the far side, to the east, rests a pile of rubble that may have once been a building. In the center of the cave, the floor is lined with regular blocks of smooth stone and edged with a higher curbing that is mostly intact.

To the south, a red flare illuminates a wide area. Noxious fumes and smoke belch from a fissure in the rock that swirls with a strange, hypnotic pattern of lights and gasses. Two openings in the east wall suggest tunnels leading farther underground.

The PCs are standing in a section of the once-famous city of Juncert. The smooth stonework they stand on is weathered, shoe-worn cobblestones. The curbing marked the sidewalks—a feature the villagers still use today in Jenkel.

Searching around the pile of debris that was once a residential house reveals nothing without magical aid to lift the great blocks of masonry. Three crushed skeletons and items of household goods are all that remain.

15. Entrance to the Plane of Fire. To the south, the hypnotic pattern is caused by the portal to the plane of Fire. Anyone coming within 30' of this

gate must make a save vs. wands or be irresistibly drawn toward the entrance to the plane. Without magical protection of sufficient potency, the PC is doomed. However, with proper magicks, the PC may find himself in the midst of what seems to be a never-ending lake of lava. As the focus of the gate shifts about the plane of Fire every three hours, PCs adventuring there have a real chance of being stranded. The DM may wish to detail a separate adventure on the plane of Fire if the PCs possess a means of surviving in the intense heat.

16. Portal to the Plane of Tarterus. This portal spews out 5'-wide clouds of darkness every few minutes, but these dissipate around the grotto in 1-4 rounds.

Any being coming within 30' of the gate is 50% likely to be affected as if by a fear spell (no saving throw). He has a further 50% chance to want to walk through the portal if unaffected by such fear, unless restrained (save vs. wands to avoid this latter compulsion).

As in the case of area 15, a separate adventure may be conducted on the plane of Darkness, with an equal chance of the adventurers becoming stranded there.

17. Worked Tunnel. PCs passing through this tunnel have a 5% chance to notice that it has recently been worked. Sefnu had the lava mephits dig along the line of curbing at the south wall to see where it led. The dissolving touch of the mephits was used to advantage—though with a certain amount of grumbling—when digging this tunnel. Dwarven characters have their normal racial chances to detect the new excavation at this point.

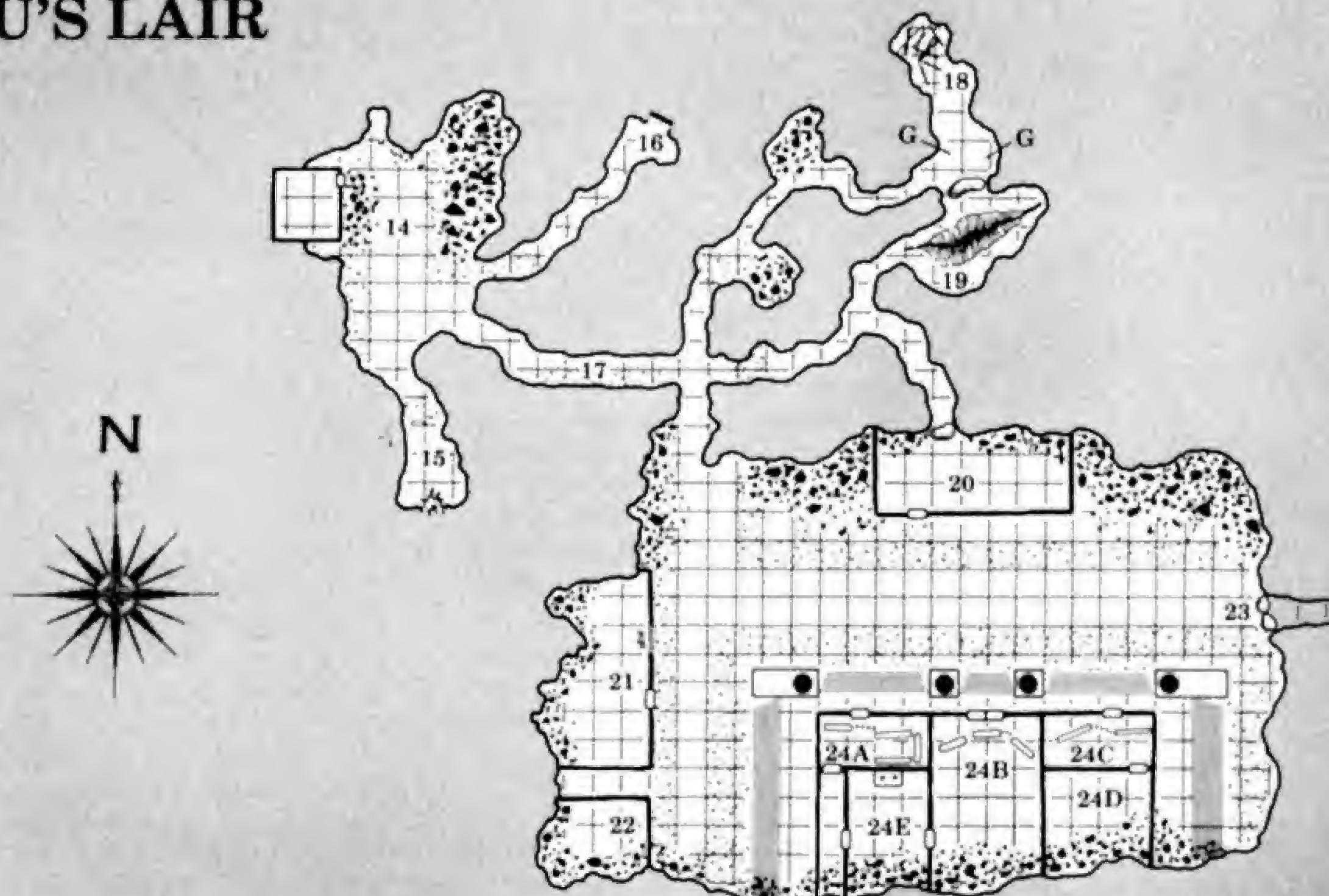
18. Ancient Diggings.

Some ancient implements of the type most commonly found in well-cultivated gardens lie around in this cavern. Bones and skulls indicate a large number of humans—perhaps a dozen or more—died or were placed here. All the bones are yellow with age. A tangle of ancient timbers sits against the north wall where the floor slopes upward.

The household implements of the few inhabitants of Juncert who survived the initial collapse of these buildings into

SEFNU'S LAIR

1 square = 10'



the cavern were used in a vain attempt to dig to freedom. Unfortunately, they rapidly ran out of the stored water needed for them to survive. If they had managed to continue digging for another 20' vertically, they could have made it out onto the surface world again.

The evil influence of the nearby *gate* to Tarterus, coupled with the bitter deaths of the survivors, has transformed them into shadows. Sefnu used a special ring to inscribe two *glyphs* that confine the shadows to this cave. This does not stop them from attacking anyone wandering into the area, but they cannot follow their victims elsewhere.

The locations of the *glyphs* are shown as G symbols on the map. The glyphs may be seen by a cleric using a *detect traps* spell, and they can be erased using a *dispel magic* spell, but this will let any remaining shadows roam free.

Shadows (12): AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 24, 20, 19, 18 (x2), 17, 16, 15, 14 (x2), 9 (x2); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based spells; ML special; AL CE; MC.

19. Lair of the Mephits. This cave may also be entered via the north cave (area 18) if the boulder between them is removed.

The cave is lit by a garish, shifting light that comes from a fissure in the floor. About 10' wide, the gash cuts the cave into two uneven portions.

Most of the light is reflected on the ceiling from the molten lava below. The 20'-drop ends in the pool that is the quarters for Sefnu's three mephit servants: Fax, Sto, and Fer. The trio is under standing orders not to attack injured parties wandering into this area, so that Sefnu may have the pleasure of dealing with them personally. Unfortunately, the three are not impressed by Sefnu's orders if Sefnu herself is not present to enforce them.

If the adventurers arrive here in a damaged or injured state, the mephits are 45% likely to press an attack. If Sefnu kicks up a fuss later, they claim that the PCs attacked them first, and they were forced to defend themselves. If a melee is going against them, the mephits try to fly out of the cave to the

relative safety of Sefnu's lair (area 24). Alternatively, they *shape change* back into their pool or slip out under the boulder at area 18, braving the undead there to keep their hides intact. Optionally, they may *gate* in other mephits, but only if at least one mephit is slain.

These creatures are good examples of their kind and share similar temperaments. Fax likes gaudy fireproof neckties of at least 7" width; Sto wears an asbestos fedora; Fer is a bermuda shorts man.

Fax, Sto, and Fer (lava mephits): AC 6; MV 12, Fly 24; HD 3; hp 24, 23, 22; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1 hp per attack plus 1-8 hp heat damage; SA breath weapon for 1-6 hp (no save), dissolving touch; SD regeneration, *gate* in other mephits, *shape change* to pool of lava; ML 10; AL CE; FF/64.

20. Ancient Building. If the mephits are in retreat from area 19 and come through here, they attempt to block the passageway with a large boulder to delay pursuit. Mephits are quite strong, but it takes two of these creatures to roll such a large rock (the trolls who lair here may help, at the DM's option).

This seems to be an ancient building, possibly some type of artisan's dwelling. The roof, though sagging, is still largely intact. Shutters serve as a front door to the single-story dwelling. There are no windows visible, though fallen beams and plaster may have hidden them beneath rubble. What furniture remains is overturned, and some of the smaller pieces are smashed. Large areas of the floor are spread with roughly cut sheepskins.

Sefnu has given this house to a band of mercenary trolls. They are supposed to wait for adventurers to come into the street outside, then move to cut them off from escape through area 17. Sefnu knows the PCs may come in the back way (through the tunnel to the north of the house) instead of the planned route, but she is quite pleased to allow noise of the trolls' combat to raise the alarm so she can prepare her defenses. The abhir has no qualms about sacrificing the trolls to weaken the party.

She has allowed the trolls the luxury of stealing livestock from the surrounding lands as long as this is done quietly. The skins on the floor are from sheep taken from the area around Jenkel and brought in through the tunnel at area 23.

Trolls (4): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 36, 31, 30, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA attack three different opponents at once, severed limbs attack; SD regeneration; ML 14; AL CE; MC.

21. Locked Store.

What might have been a shop or store stands here, although its rear portion has been engulfed by rock falling from the side of the cave. The building's roof is still sound, though the shop front is dilapidated and boarded up. The door is firmly closed by a single, freshly oiled bolt.

A bell hanging inside the door of the shop rings loudly as the PCs push the bolt back and shove on the door, unless magical *silence* is used. The ringing of the bell alerts the trolls at area 20 if the PCs have not already disposed of them. It also alerts Sefnu (area 24) if they've not yet encountered her.

Inside, the furnishings have been removed and the timbers used for scaffolding in the diggings at area 18. The abhir has turned the shop into a storage



area for some of the items dedicated to the "oracle" by Broderick. Barrels of grain and vegetables lie with carcasses of wild animals and livestock in various states of decay. In the space just behind the boarded-up window (exactly where an enterprising PC will step should he decide to crawl in through the window instead of using the door), a sheep carcass is infested with rot grubs. If disturbed, the grubs do their best to grab onto the nearest living being.

Rot grubs (15): AC 9; MV 1; HD 1 hp each; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA burrow into living flesh to kill host in 1-3 turns; ML 5; AL N; MC.

Aside from the rotting offerings, everything else in this room is ancient, hailing from the days of vanished Jun-cert. The animal sacrifices have had their throats cut in the same manner as the calf at the "welcoming ceremonies." One or two are headless.

22. Crawl Space. The roof here has collapsed almost entirely, but PCs may enter the crawl space inside quite easily. This area is uninteresting unless the PCs wish to hide in relative safety for any reason.

23. Exit Tunnel. A tunnel hidden behind these boulders wends its way eastward and up to the surface, exiting some way from the village. Sefnu and her servants use this exit when they go out scouting or raiding.

The tunnel ends in a short ravine about a half-mile from the village palisade. It may be located with a 25% chance of success per half day searching in the area. If the DM feels discovery of the tunnel opening will destroy the atmosphere of the adventure, no amount of searching will uncover it; the PCs must first explore the dungeon, finding the exit from inside.

24. Colonnade and Library Building.

This is the largest building in the cavern. Its roof has been crushed flat by the weight of the cave ceiling, but pillars of marble still support a colonnade running along the front of the structure. In the center of the windowless north wall is a pair of bronze double doors. To the east and west are two single bronze doors, each closed tightly.

Its architects designed the library with skylights but no windows, allowing more space for shelving inside. These skylights are now gone, and the library is the lair of Sefnu. The abhir has added spyholes to the frequent ventilation holes in the outer walls of the buildings, so she should have a good view of the approach of the PCs under normal circumstances. There is no set place for the abhir to be, as she *teleports* about the various rooms every few minutes, keeping tabs on the adventurers.

The DM who wishes to randomize Sefnu's movements when the PCs arrive can use the following table and percentile dice:

1d100 Sefnu is in:

- 01-19 Minor study (24A)
- 20-39 Second study (24C)
- 40-59 Main chamber (24B)
- 60-79 Kamadans' lair (24D)
- 80-00 Evil shrine (24E)

The abhir wants the PCs captured so that they may be sacrificed to her lord in the shrine at area 24E. If her traps and monsters fail to achieve this end, she will intervene personally, using her *teleportation* power to remove herself to a place of safety if badly injured.

Sefnu's Plans

Sefnu is on this plane to collect souls for her lord (Broderick's new deity) through sacrifices of strong warriors—in game terms, high-level characters. If she can pervert the workings of law and goodness in the process, so much the better. She has combined both tasks by duping the villagers into changing their Ceremonies of Spring. The abhir understands humans and their psychology from examining captives in Tarterus.

Sefnu delights in her task of spreading evil almost as much as she does in physical combat, but her high intelligence means she has contingency plans in case any group of PCs proves too strong for her. If this occurs, she *teleports* to the attic of the clock tower (area 9) and *polymorphs* into a human female warrior, to personally command Broderick in bringing the villagers to war readiness. As the cleric knows her voice, he'll obey, thinking the "oracle" has revealed herself at last. Because she has purposely not shown herself to Broderick, even in *polymorphed* form, the impact of revealing herself to him in an emergency will be more powerful, and

she will not delay in carrying out her wishes. The PCs may find themselves at odds with the whole village—possibly besieged in a cottage or shed—and the DM must handle things from there.

Sefnu will have caused the deaths of at least those 12 adventurers she has already slain, and many villagers might die if ordered to attack the PCs. In these conditions, even her involuntary transferral to Tarterus will not be seen as a defeat.

Of course, Sefnu is not going to allow herself to be banished while she still has a chance to defeat the PCs. In abhir form, she attempts to *charm* party members to gain their confidence, using her other powers against troublemakers as necessary. In combat she wields six *long swords* +1 (using only one of these if in human form). If badly pressed, she is likely to *gate* in another abhir, blaming its presence on the PCs if above ground, or using it as an ally if below.

Sefnu: hp 56; six *long swords* +1; *ring of undead confinement* that allows the wearer to write special *glyphs* to confine undead to a particular area (see area 18). For Sefnu's complete statistics, see the sidebar on page 19.

24A. Minor Study.

The brass door opens onto a scene of dust and decay. Broken shelves and torn books litter the floor. The shelves standing near the north wall are laden with scrolls and parchments. To the south, a headless skeleton lies on its back, clad in plate mail and still clutching the hilt of a broad sword. There are numerous scuffmarks and stains in the dust all around.

A trip wire strung between two shelves releases a weighted net attached to the ceiling (which lies in darkness). PCs caught in the 10'-square net may try to cut themselves free if they have cutting weapons in hand. Otherwise, they are at the mercy of 15 ogrillons who rush in from area 24E.

The books on the shelves are non-magical but historically valuable. They tell the story of the city of Jenkel and include a handwritten account of its downfall (penned by one of the survivors before she perished). There are from 10-100 useful books here, ranging in value from 100-1,000 gp each.

The skeleton is that of an adventurer who resisted capture too strongly. There

is nothing of value on his person.

If they are unable to subdue the party, the ogrillons have been ordered to retreat to area 24E. If they capture anyone, they bring him to that area.

24B. Main Chamber.

This looks like it was once a fine library, although only a few shelves of the freestanding type are left. Books and papers are strewn everywhere, as if the shelves were overturned and removed without due care for their contents.

Spell-casters may be pleased that searchers overlooked a scroll with the spells *polymorph other* and *incendiary cloud*, which may be located after 7-12 turns of searching. However, the mass of paper under which these are hidden is home to a number of bookworms.

Bookworms (10): AC 2; MV 12, burrow 3; HD 1/4; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA eat books; SD camouflage; ML special; AL N; MC.

The shelves here are also trapped with a trip wire and net, with ogrillons from area 24E attacking (if there are any left) as at area 24A.

24C. Second Study. Apart from the lack of a skeleton, the description of this room is similar to area 24A. However, the trip wire here is also connected to a pressure pad, so that if it is set off (and the net falls), or if weight is put on any area in the 10' south of the wire, the door to area 24D opens.

The books here are as valuable as those found at area 24A.

24D. Kamadans' Lair. These beasts serve Sefnu and have been trained to use their breath weapons on intruders in the first round of combat (unless surprised).

Kamadans (2): AC 4; MV 18; HD 4 +2; hp 34, 24; THAC0 17; #AT 3 +5; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 plus 1-4 (x5); SA breath weapon (cone of *sleep* 30' long, with base diameter 10'); ML 13; AL CE; FF/55.

Hidden in the bones and rubbish of the kamadans' lair is a *battle axe* +2.

24E. The Evil Shrine. This is the room Sefnu has made her own. The ogrillons mentioned at 24A congregate here.

Ogrillon guards (15): AC 6; MV 12;

HD 2; hp 15, 14, 12, 11(×2), 10, 9(×2), 8, 6(×3), 5(×2), 4; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 2-7/2-7; ML 11; AL CE; FF/70.

This room smells foul. Incense burners reek of noxious weeds and produce thick, oily smoke. Piled about the room are containers of precious and semiprecious stones, gold and silver coins, copper bowls, candlesticks, jewelry, and fine weapons.

Against the north wall is a large block of granite (actually the top of a fallen pillar), blemished with dark stains that cover its top and sides. Atop this stone is a huge black knife stained like the altar it rests upon.

In front of this altar is a pile of gear and supplies similar to your own. On top of the pile is a gruesome sight: The heads of a dozen adventurers in various states of decay stare horribly at you.

What happens next depends on what has already gone before in this adventure. This might be a good time for Sefnu to make a dramatic entrance with her *teleport* ability, if the PCs have not already encountered and slain her.

Sefnu's preferred method of sacrifice is to capture victims and slay them on the stone altar. However, unless the PCs have been defeated at this stage, combat is likely.

Sefnu fights with six *long swords* +1 but hedges with spells before closing to strike. The final combat should be fast and furious—there is a good chance Sefnu may get between the PCs and the exits, and she is large enough to present a formidable challenge to anyone trying to reach the doors.

Sefnu reserves her constriction attack for the PC she considers to be the most powerful spell-caster. She fights six different opponents at once, unless one PC is doing greater damage, in which case she directs three or more weapon attacks at this unusual nuisance.

Sefnu is a frightening figure (in abhir form) with fiery red eyes and golden hair. She wears studded, decorative bracers (nonmagical) on her humanoid arms. Her snake body is metallic black with a high sheen. Refer to "Sefnu's Plans" for further options in role-playing this confrontation.

The treasures in this room are a collection of goods scavenged from the ruins in these caves, and personal treasure and gear carried in by unwitting

victims. The following list identifies some of the items in the hoard. The DM may add to, delete from, or otherwise change the list as he sees fit: 5,548 cp; 3,487 sp; 546 pp; 4,327 gp; a *long sword* +1, a suit of *plate mail* +2, a *cursed shield* -4, a *wand of lightning*; 17 silver platters worth 170 gp total; a brass candlestick worth 60 gp; a small sack of gems worth 800 gp (×10); 750 gp (×2); 450 gp (×2); 300 gp; 100 gp; and 80 gp.

Additional magical items to be found include a *ring of spell turning*, a potion of *delusion*, a scroll of *protection from water elementals*, and a *carpet of flying*.

Included in the haul are four pieces of statuary, each worth 1,000 gp but very difficult to transport; a disconnected ornamental fountain worth 900 gp; and a book. This book is the working manual for the clock tower of Juncert, so its value to Broderick is high. If sold to a sage or gnome interested in clockwork mechanisms, it may fetch 1,000-6,000 gp. The miscellaneous adventurers' gear and equipment is worth a total of 5,000 gp.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs had best not expect a dinner party to be given them if they slay Sefnu and reveal the plot to lure adventurers to the village for what it actually was. The villagers will be agast that they were so duped, and they will swiftly lay the blame on Broderick. They will also lay blame on the PCs just for showing how gullible they were and for revealing their communal guilt in causing the deaths of a dozen adventurers. Broderick will quickly be attacked and either slain or driven from the community. The unlucky cleric will also be abandoned by his most recent patron deity (and by his former deity as well), and he will never again gain spell-casting powers. A broken, haunted man, Broderick will attempt to flee, never to be seen again.

Once the cleric is gone, the villagers will turn their backs and shut their doors to the PCs and to all other clerics and holy men who visit them from that day on. The pyramid will be covered with debris, cursed, and ignored.

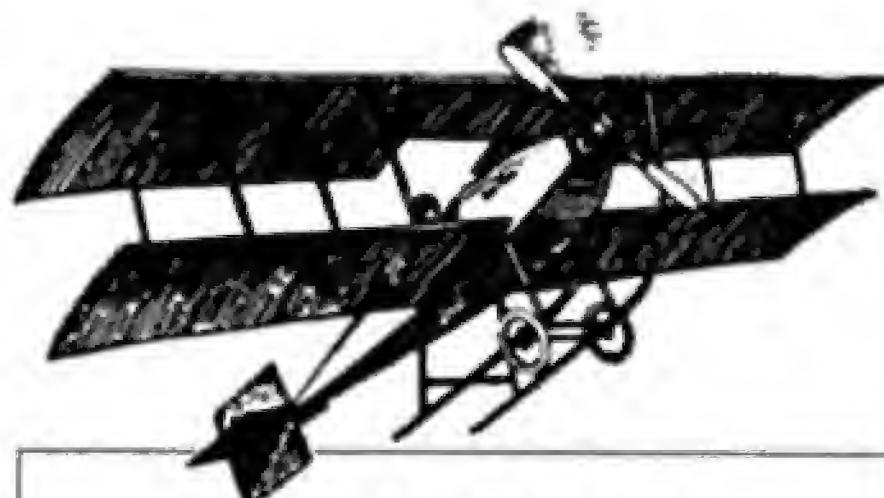
Other adventures may suggest themselves by the PCs' actions in this scenario. If Sefnu *gates* in a second abhir in any combat, the adventurers may have more troubles. The second abhir will work with Sefnu to create further havoc

of the worst possible sort throughout the area.

The PCs could enter the *gates* below Jenkel and adventure on either the plane of Fire or in Tarterus. In the latter case, they may go as rescuers of the enslaved descendants of the people of Juncert who were trapped there when their section of the city was *gated* away.

Rumors of other buried sections of the city may lead to further adventures, with the PCs discovering a relic from the past glory of Juncert that they can make use of themselves. For instance, the magical *apparatus of Kwalish* (1st Edition DMG, page 137; 2nd Edition DMG, page 159) may have had a prototype in some buried part of the city.

Finally, Sefnu may neither win nor lose in this adventure, but simply withdraw to another village, town, or city in *polymorphed* disguise, to further the cause of evil. Can the PCs locate her in her new disguise and thwart her newest plots? Ω



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OLD SEA-DOG

BY THOMAS M. KANE

A barque with a bark; or, You can't be Sirius!

Artwork by Paul Jaquays

Tom writes: "My family celebrated Thanksgiving early, and I got the contracts for this adventure while chopping celery. Chickens used to bring luck, but maybe any poultry will do."

"Ignore the rumors! I speak a little Putonghua, but my GURPS® China book [from Steve Jackson Games] will appear in English."

"Old Sea-Dog" is an AD&D® adventure for 2-5 characters of levels 2-5 (about 10 total levels). Any class or race is possible, although thieves and druids have an advantage. This adventure takes place in a seaside city called Chardon, but you can adapt it to any port in your campaign.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

When Sir Veneti of Chardon invites you to his villa, you can already guess what he wants. The whole town is talking about his stolen dog. Each year, the aristocrats of Chardon stake fortunes and honor on the city's Mastiff Duel. Everyone expected Veneti's splendid mastiff Sirius to win. Then the animal vanished.

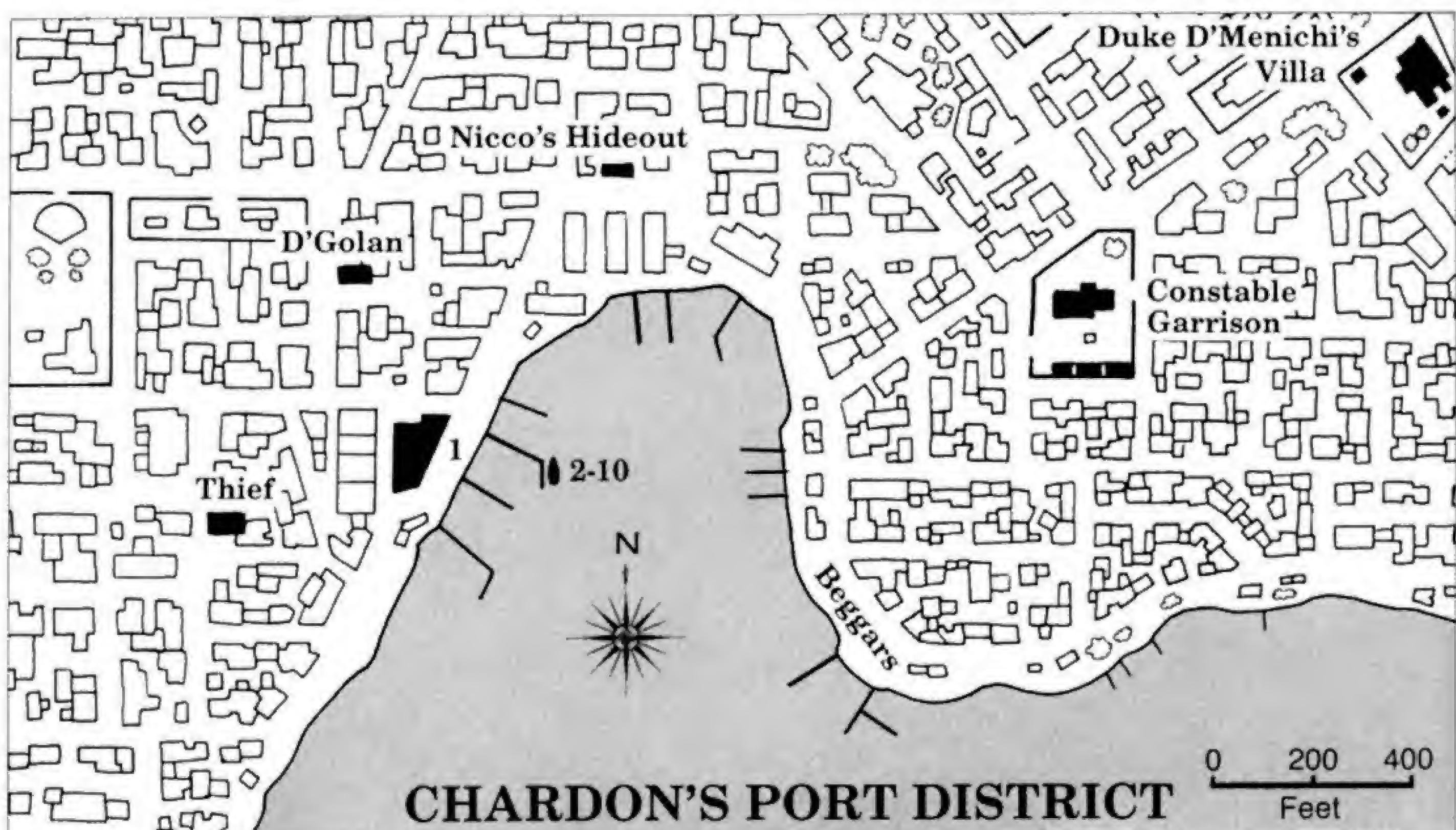
Your intuition proves correct. Veneti needs "trusty souls" to recover his dog, although he knows quite well who took the animal. His rival, Sir Machi, lord of a nearby island, covets a sire for his own kennel. Veneti offers you 100 gp each if you get Sirius back in time for the match.

For the Dungeon Master

The DM may either reveal the following information in the introduction or force the adventurers to unearth it.

Sir Machi paid a seafarer named Leono to kidnap the dog and ship it to him just before the Mastiff Duel. The dog is currently aboard Leono's ship, the *Gale's Teeth*. Captain Leono himself stays at the nearby Whale's Eye Inn.

Leono is the roguish younger son of a Chardon nobleman and often does business with Sir Veneti. His birth entitles him to the honorary post of commissioner in Chardon's constabulary. The post allows him to give orders and entails some bureaucratic duties, but



Leono spends most of his time in adventurous exploits. This makes Sir Veneti's circumstances doubly difficult. He cannot expect help from the police, because their commissioner is the thief.

The central adventure concerns the party's attempt to seize Sirius from Leono's ship. If you want to start the action at once, assume that Sir Veneti bribed a local informer to learn that Leono has Sirius. The party can then begin the adventure near the Whale's Eye Inn, with the above information. You might also have the party piece Sirius' story together from gossip. The following lists show rumors and contacts who can provide information. This adventure leaves the city's geography and politics flexible, for the benefit of DMs who wish to convert Chardon into an already-existing port in their own campaigns.

Any NPC to whom the PCs talk may know one story from the following list.

Common Rumors (Roll 1d8)

1: A gambler named Shifty Nicco plans to "fix" the upcoming Mastiff Duel. If you find out what dog he is

wagering on, bet everything on it. (False)

2: Leono, the Commissioner of Constables, is simply discarding all complaints dealing with the Mastiff Duel instead of investigating them. (True)

3-4: The Whale's Eye Inn is becoming the wildest bar in town. If you're looking for pirates, smugglers, or swords-for-hire, that's the place to go. The owners just bought a new sign with their hush money—elf-blown glass, no less. (An exaggeration, but for the PCs' purposes, close enough.)

5: One of Duke D'Menichi's warriors recently lost several hundred gold pieces of the duke's money in bets on the qualifying matches that come before the Mastiff Duel. After that, one of Sir Machi's lackeys sent a package wrapped in tissue paper to D'Menichi's villa. The package contained a tin cup, presumably for begging. The duke went red and swore to meet Sir Machi in a duel. (True)

6: Longshoremen are working day and night to get the *Gales' Teeth* loaded and ready to sail. Somebody must be in a hurry! (True)

7-8: Sir Machi, the coward, refuses to

leave his island estate because he knows Duke D'Menichi wants to fight him. (True)

In addition, anyone in the city has a 60% chance of knowing that Leono, Commissioner of Constables, owns the *Gale's Teeth*. They have a 15-30% chance of knowing where it is berthed (the DM should choose the exact percentage based on how close the PCs are to the waterfront when they ask; the closer they are, the higher their chances). Nobody sees anything particularly interesting about Leono's profession or ship. Therefore, no one will reveal this information unless asked.

The PCs may meet the following people by accident or through their own actions. Constables automatically arrive within 5-30 (5d6) minutes of loud noises. The PCs might also seek out certain NPCs mentioned in rumors they have heard. To generate random city encounters, roll 1d6 once per hour. On a roll of 1 or 2, the party meets an NPC from the following list:

Minor City Encounters (Roll 1d8)

1: Constables. Police travel in groups of four, armed with clubs and wearing studded leather vests. They arrest law-breakers and keep the peace. Ordinary officers know nothing about Sir Machi's plot. If the PCs ask for help with Sirius, the police open an investigation. However, once the patrol officers consult a city garrison, they immediately stop the search and will not explain their reason. Leono has ordered them not to investigate dog affairs.

Constables (four per group): AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; AL LN; clubs, long swords.

2: Duke D'Menichi. A tall, swaggering man, the Duke D'Menichi gallops through the streets on his great war horse, trampling anyone in his path. If members of the party encounter him randomly, each PC must roll below his dexterity on 1d20 to get out of the way. Those who fail suffer two hoof attacks. Five servants ride with the duke and keep angry victims at bay while the duke rides on. If necessary, they pay up to 5 gp in compensation.

The duke seldom grants audiences to strangers. If the PCs want to see him, they must bribe his 10 door guards with at least 50 gp or get D'Golan (see #5) to vouch for them. The duke greets guests heartily once he agrees to receive them. He hates Sir Machi passionately, due to both the recent insult and a continual dispute over trade rights in foreign ports. The duke would love to help the party discomfit his rival. He knows that Leono would conduct any of Sir Machi's business on the mainland, and he can guess that Sirius is on the *Gale's Teeth*.

Duke D'Menichi: AC 5; MV 9; F8; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 12, Co 13, I 11, W 9, Ch 15; ML 15; AL CN; broad sword, chain mail.

Servants (5) and Door guards (10): AC 6; MV 9; F2; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; AL CG; staff, scale mail.

Warhorses (6): AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; ML 6; AL N; MC (horse, medium).

3: Leono's Sailors. The PCs encounter 2-8 muscular sailors from the *Gale's Teeth* who are enjoying their shore leave. They talk freely with anyone who

buys them drinks. If the PCs get an encounter reaction of Friendly (see the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 103), these sailors tell humorous stories about their captain's attempts to hide a dog in his room at the Whale's Eye Inn. However, if the PCs roll a Hostile reaction or reveal that they work for Sir Veneti, the sailors start a brawl. Alternately, the DM may have the sailors react according to the way in which the PCs role-play the encounter with them.

Sailors (2-8): AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; AL N; leather armor, long swords.

4: Shifty Nicco. Despite the rumors, Shifty Nicco has not managed to rig the Mastiff Duel; he just wishes he could. If anybody asks about his schemes, this red-haired hustler merely smiles broadly and offers to sell gambling tips for 10 gp each. Most of these hints involve revealing which city notable has bet on which dog. Leono, for example, has bet large sums on Sir Machi's kennel—for years in advance. Nicco gives him especially favorable odds since he is trying to predict the distant future.

Nicco also accepts bets of up to 500 gp on the Mastiff Duel. A PC has a 10% chance of winning any wager he makes with Nicco (30% chance if the PC has animal handling proficiency).

Nicco: AC 8; MV 12; T5; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; PP 35%, OL 30%, F/RT 25%, MS 40%, HS 35%, DN 45%, CW 90%, RL nil; ML 10; AL N; short sword, leather armor.

5: D'Golan. This young swordsman wears a fur vest and a huge, expensive hat but leans against a wall in the Chardon slums. He is the henchman who bet Duke D'Menichi's money on a dog that lost the qualifying match for the Mastiff Duel.

The duke confiscated D'Golan's funds in anger, leaving the swordsman with no way to pay for his inn room. D'Golan feels angry enough to fight anyone who offends him. However, he is also eager to find new friends, especially considering his circumstances. If he learns about the party's quest, he will eagerly introduce the adventurers to his duke, hoping to take credit for helping to humiliate Sir Machi and get his old position back. The duke's door guards

will admit D'Golan and anyone with him, since he is still one of House D'Menichi's best warriors.

D'Golan: AC 5; MV 12; F7; hp 48; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +2; S 18, D 17, C 15, I 11, W 9, Ch 16; ML 14; AL CG; broad sword, leather armor.

6-7: Beggars. These three young men hold out tin cups; they may or may not be feigning blindness (50% chance each time the party sees them). If the PCs ask questions, one steps forward and explains that money helps his memory. None of the beggars have any useful information. However, after receiving sufficient bribes, they will make up a story. The DM should invent false answers for the party's questions.

Beggars: AC 10; MV 12; zero-level humans; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 6; AL N.

8: Thief. This short man attempts to pick a PC's pocket or rob a lone pedestrian at knife point. He knows nothing that might help the party.

Thief: AC 6; MV 12; T8; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1; S 16, D 17, C 15, I 11, W 10, Ch 12; PP 75%, OL 50%, F/RT 25%, MS 65%, HS 55%, DN 55%, CW 90%, RL nil; ML 8; AL CE; short sword, leather armor, knife.

The Gale's Teeth

The adventure begins the evening before Chardon's Mastiff Duel. Leono plans to sail at dawn, so this last night is the perfect time to rob the ship. Unfortunately, other people think so, too. Leono accepted another bribe from a woman who calls herself Julia and claims to be smuggling pearls. She is actually Red Francis, a pirate whose ship sank in a recent typhoon. The pirate woman needs a new vessel and plans to hijack this one.

Francis escaped the shipwreck with nothing but a cutlass, the jewelry she wore, and a flagon of enchanted tonic that was on her belt. That is enough. While hiding her pearls, Francis used her magical, physical, and financial charms (from strategically converted pearls) to corrupt several of Leono's conscript sailors. They swore a blood oath to seize the *Gale's Teeth* and grow rich together on stolen gold. These mutineers returned from their shore leave

early and plan to sail away before the loyal sailors return.

Sir Veneti will probably hire the party over his afternoon tea. This means their adventure begins in the early evening, giving the PCs time to gather information before going to the ship.

If the PCs can swim, they might sneak onto Leono's ship by climbing the lines that hang over its sides. See Table 67 on page 123 of the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, considering the lines as a slightly slippery rope-and-wall surface. Under 1st Edition rules, thieves can climb the lines with a +30% bonus, and other characters have a 60% chance to succeed. Anyone who fails falls into the water, taking no damage but making a splash. There is a 70% chance that this sound brings Leono from the poop deck (area 4) to investigate.

Although the party might win a battle with the ship's crew, they should try to avoid one. A noisy fight anywhere on the ship attracts the guards from the gangplank (area 2), the poop deck (area 4), and the bunkroom (area 10). The "drunks" (Red Francis's men) on the quarter deck (area 5) avoid trouble. However, if the fight moves to their area, they obey Captain Leono's orders and avoid revealing their treachery.

At 11:00 P.M., consult "Anchors Aweigh" for Red Francis's plans. The adventure climaxes as the ship lurches out of the harbor while the adventurers try to get Sirius away without annoying him. Red Francis may start the mutiny sooner if her plans seem threatened. Throughout the adventure, be ready to improvise NPC responses to PC actions.

Set Encounters

1. Whale's Eye Inn. The Whale's Eye Inn advertises its name with a foot-wide glass eye that has a large crack running across the pupil. The air inside the inn smells like fish, more due to the customers than the dinner. The inn serves wine, ale, and meals at *PHB* prices.

If the party hunts for gossip, they hear tales of a sea-serpent who eats only black-haired sailors, advice on finding prawns, and a rumor that Red Francis, the infamous female pirate, lost her ship in a recent storm. Since she survived, "a man does well to watch his anchor."

Three plump serving women, a gray-haired innkeeper, and two potboys wait on customers. All of them chat happily

about Captain Leono, who gave back his room key at noon. They like the captain because he has "the purse of a gentleman and the thirst of a drunken swab."

Inn staff members (6): AC 10; MV 12; zero-level characters; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT nil (unarmed); ML 8; AL N.

The PCs can befriend a serving woman by sharing stories and buying large amounts of food or drink. She can tell them that last night Leono tried to sneak a huge dog into his room by hiding it in an ale barrel. As two sailors carried the keg through the common room, the dog started barking. In panic, Leono tried to pretend he was making the dog noises. If anyone asks for other stories about Leono, the servant smirks and whispers, "Well . . . I won't say anything, but I think he's got a sweetheart. He spent several evenings in the common room with this dark-haired little thing, and he was so earnest."

If the adventurers visit Leono's room, they discover the door unfastened. If a thief examines the door, he realizes that somebody picked the lock but broke it in the process and was unable to close it again. Inside the room, they find gray hairs and other traces of dog. (Red Francis picked Leono's lock to obtain deck plans of his ship.)

2. Gangplank. Five sailors in open leather jerkins guard the *Gale's Teeth*'s gangplank. Leono has not told them about Sirius, and they assume this is a routine voyage. Therefore, if the adventurers shuffle up disguised as nondescript sailors, the guards may let them aboard. Obviously, this trick will not work if the party contains a halfling, dwarf, or other attention-getting member. The guards attempt to take any obvious intruders before Captain Leono (on the poop deck, area 4). These deck hands have no qualms about breaking the heads of troublesome adventurers. They serve their captain loyally.

Gangplank guards (5): AC 6; MV 12; F5; hp 30 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 16; ML 13; AL LN; leather armor, long swords.

3. Main Deck. The masts cast long shadows in the twilight. Nobody guards this area, but the sailors on the gangplank and poop deck (areas 2 and 4) automatically see anyone who stands erect here. Spools of rope and boxes of cargo lie everywhere. The boxes contain

bolts of linen. It takes 15 minutes of searching to examine them all. A thief may hide in shadows with a +40% bonus amid the mess. Other PCs can hide with successful dexterity checks, making additional dexterity rolls every five minutes to avoid detection from the gangplank and poop deck. Despite the disorder, all rigging is in place and the sail ready to unfurl.

Two rowboats are strapped to the main deck, inverted and stacked. Sirius naps beneath the lower one, pacified with a once-meaty hambone. He is neither chained nor tied. However, the boats are too heavy for him to move, and he cannot escape. Anybody who thinks to use his nose may attempt an intelligence check to detect the smell of dog. The odor is too general, however, to trace to the rowboats. The party must pass two dexterity checks and two extra hiding checks to unfasten the boats.

Sirius feels content and sleepy. He growls in curiosity when the party lifts the boat that covers him. The mastiff has dark gray fur with golden highlights, sharp black eyes, wide toenails that grip the deck, and massive jaws. He blinks at the party, making up his mind about them. A PC must pass an animal handling proficiency check to befriend Sirius. Characters without animal handling proficiency may attempt wisdom checks instead, with -4 penalties to their wisdom scores. If anybody fails a check, Sirius barks once in warning. This has a 30% chance of attracting Leono's attention from the poop deck (see area 4). If the party persists in annoying Sirius after a bark, he attacks. The party must attempt another check for each action they want Sirius to take. They may gain a +2 on these checks by offering him meat.

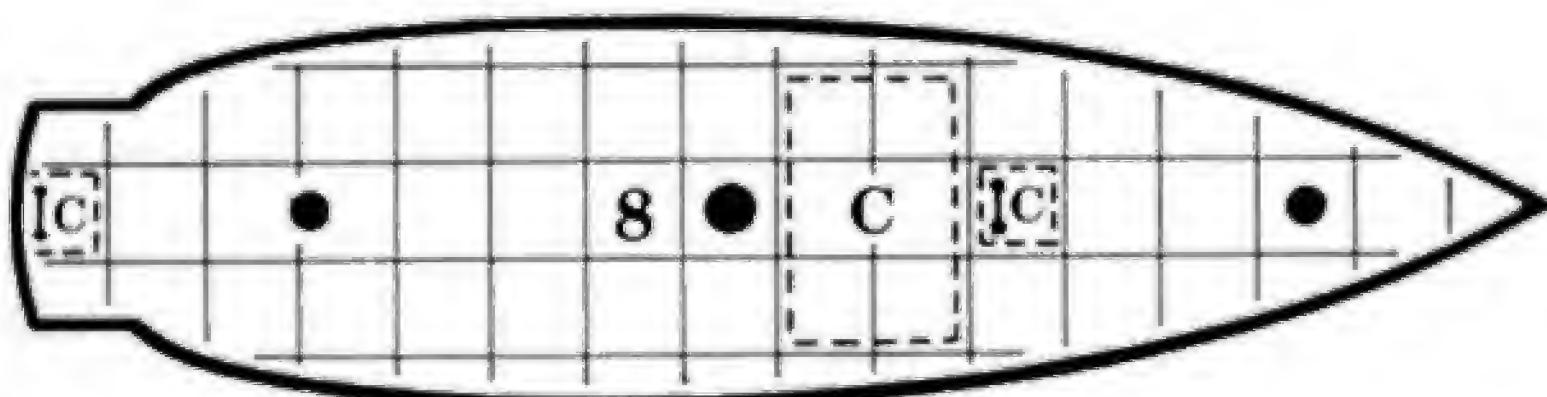
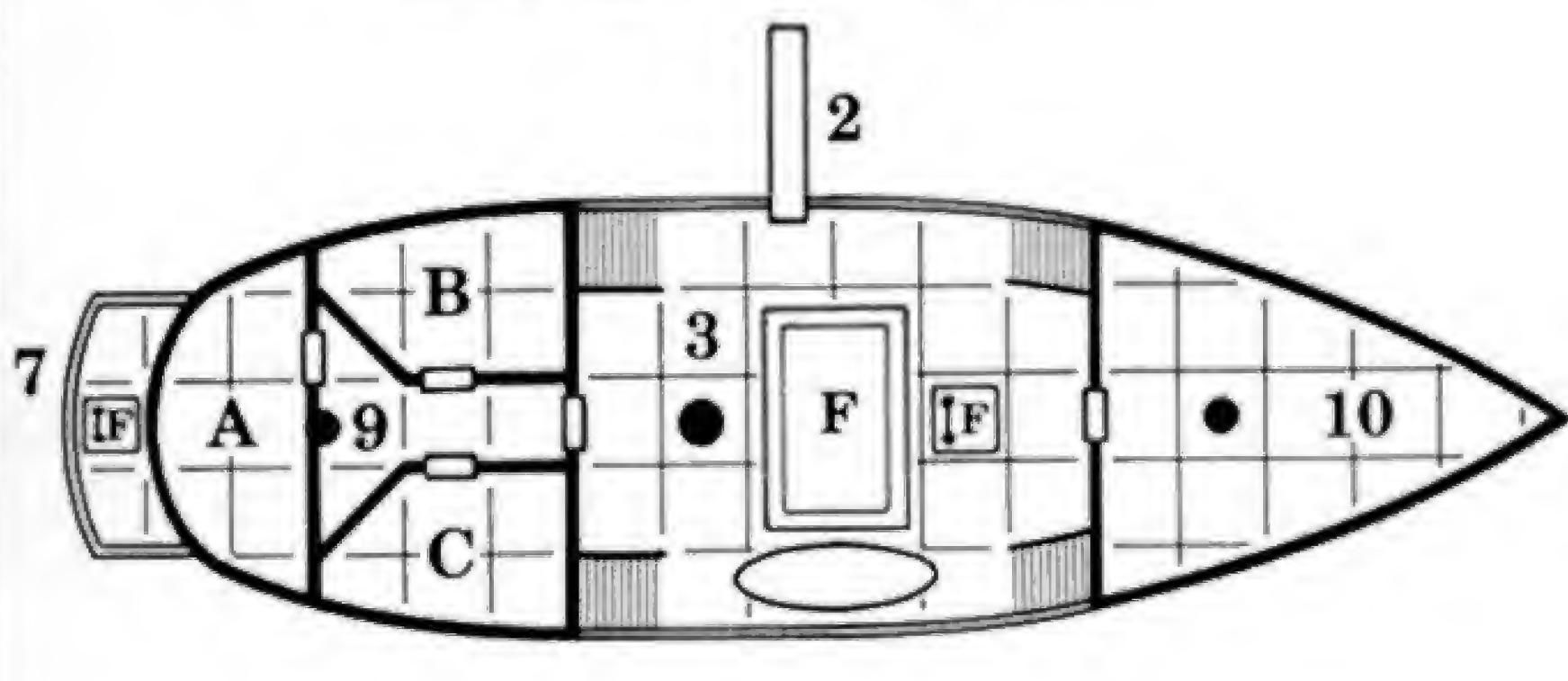
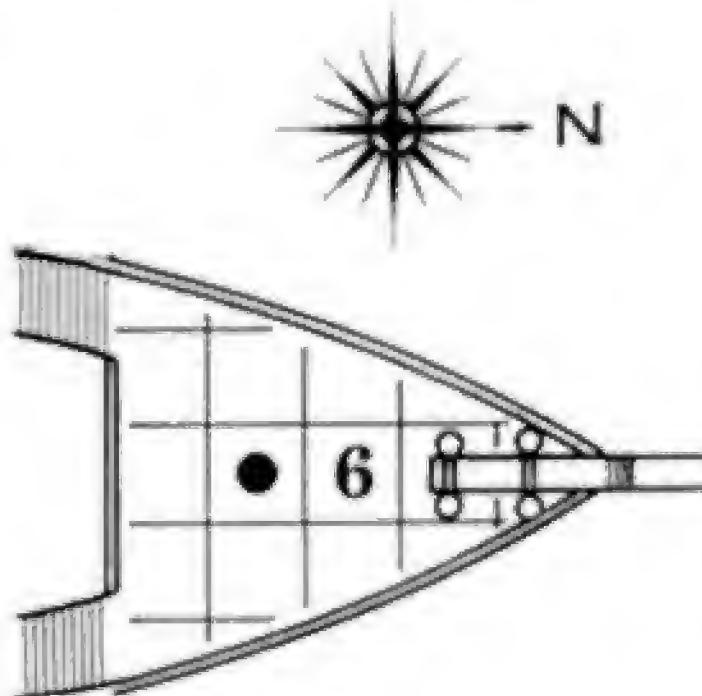
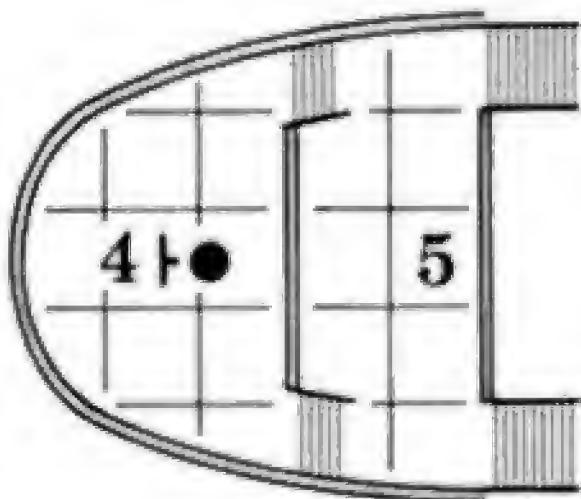
Sirius: AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML 9; AL N; MC (dogs, war).

Sirius does not care about being rescued. Veneti never spent much affection on him except for a rowdy thump on the head after a winning bout. If anyone uses a *speak with animals* spell or other magic to communicate with Sirius, he responds with languorous gruffness. The mastiff merely snarls if the party threatens him or warns that he may be ill-treated by his new masters. The only bribe likely to interest him is a steak dinner.

Sirius cannot climb. To get him off the ship, the party either must smuggle

THE GALE'S TEETH

1 square = 5'



him over the gangplank or lower him overboard. He weighs 160 lbs. A thief who can carry him suffers a -70% penalty on his climb-walls roll for carrying him down a ratline. Nonthieves have no chance at all to succeed. Furthermore, anyone carrying Sirius must pass both a strength and dexterity check to avoid holding him in an uncomfortable position. If either check fails, the dog yelps loudly enough to alert Leono and then retaliates with a severe bite. Sirius also hates water and attacks if the party gets him wet.

4. Poop Deck. Captain Leono stands by the tiller directing two sailors as they prepare the ship to sail the next day. Naturally, they seize intruders. If Leono calls, the guards on the gangplank (area 2) hurry here. However, if newcomers walk aboard on the gangplank and ask to see the captain, Leono has no justification to assume that they are enemies. He feels suspicious but does not want to draw attention by attacking strangers. Therefore, he talks cordially with the adventurers until they betray their intentions.

Captain Leono: AC 7; MV 12; F7; hp 27; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 15, C 13, I 12, W 9, Ch 17; ML 17; AL N; leather armor, long sword.

Sailors (2): AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; AL N; leather armor, long swords, long daggers.

Leono sees himself as a dashing man with the trace of outlawry a true swashbuckler requires. He stands 6' tall, with long dark hair, a white blouse, and a black captain's hat. A slim long sword swings from his hip. The rank of Commissioner of Constables is mostly honorary, and Leono spends most of his time at sea. He knows little about police business in the city.

If Leono catches the PCs sneaking aboard, he arrests them. He assumes they planned to stow away and flee Chardon, probably after some crime. He laughs sardonically at the irony—escaping the police on the Commissioner of Constables' vessel. By playing along with this, the party could appeal to his sense of roguishness and buy its freedom. He demands at least 500 gp as a bribe. Otherwise, Leono trusses his captives and sends them with two guards to the city palace to face a judge. This removes the PCs from this adventure, although you might create more scenarios around their trial or escape.

If the PCs enter on the gangplank and ask to buy passage on Leono's boat or discusses other legitimate transactions, he brusquely tells them to try someone else; his ship is full. The guards from the gangplank immediately escort the party away.

If the party somehow learns of Red Francis and warns Leono about her, make a reaction roll (2nd Edition *DMG*, page 103) on the Indifferent column, modified by the speaker's charisma. On a roll of Hostile, Leono assumes that the adventurers are plotting against him and the woman he knows only as "Julia." He calls his crew to capture the PCs and sends them to prison on charges of burglary. On a Friendly result, he insists on immediately confronting Red Francis. Role-play this as appropriate. On all other results, he refuses to believe them.

If, through stupidity or cupidity, the PCs reveal that they wants Sirius (or worse, get caught with him), Leono panics. He calls his guards to lock the party in the hold, and sets sail at once with whatever crew is available. While

the PCs are in captivity, Red Francis attempts to charm them. Afterward, she releases them for her own plot. See areas 8 and 9 for more details.

Leono's two assistants now serve Red Francis. Both of them toil vigorously, since the ship must be ready to sail much sooner than their master knows. Their long daggers are concealed in their boots. Until the mutiny begins, they obey Captain Leono.

5. Quarter Deck. Piles of sailcloth lie ready for the sailors to haul up the masts. Six men lie sprawled on the piles, pretending that they got very drunk in town and returned early to sleep. Actually, they plan to join Red Francis's mutiny. These men do their best to ignore distractions.

Sailors (6): AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; AL N; leather armor, long swords.

6. Forecastle. No sailors occupy this crenelated tower. However, if the PCs climb aboard here, their elevated position makes them obvious from the poop deck (area 4). Furthermore, the sail is ready and somebody has cleared all clutter away. Therefore, thieves hide in shadows with a -10% penalty. A chest to one side of the deck contains 20 crossbows and 300 quarrels.

Red Francis's accomplices have prepared this area for their escape. The main anchor has been lifted. Anyone with seamanship proficiency knows that sailors would never berth a ship like this for long. The slightest breeze could tear it from the dock.

7. Balcony. This wooden tower hangs below the stern, providing a fortress for archers. A chest bolted to the floor here once held crossbows, but Red Francis removed them for her mutineers, then relocked the chest. A trapdoor on the balcony leads into the hold (area 8).

8. Hold. The hold smells dank. Foul water sloshes in the central bilge. Boxes and barrels stand everywhere, in various stages of packing. Except for any light source the PCs have brought, the hold is pitch dark.

Several huge barrels lean against the hold walls. Each one has a plugged bunghole where a tap can be inserted. They contain drinking water, which gushes out if anyone pulls the cork. The

crates contain linen and fine vases for trade. Each vase weighs 1 lb. and is worth 5 gp; there are 100 vases in all. The PCs can also find the ship's provisions here: 200 man-days worth of food and water.

Leono learned not to keep Sirius in a barrel. He now has the dog under a lifeboat on the main deck. It takes the adventurers two hours to assure themselves that a dog could not be in any of the containers. Allow the players to roll a six-sided die once every 10 minutes of game time. They should think this means their characters might find something. Actually, if they roll a 1, Red Francis notices the searchers and attempts to enchant them. See private quarters (area 9).

9. Private Quarters. These cramped rooms each contain a pallet, cabinet, mirror, and fist-sized porthole. Captain Leono lives in one room (area A). His two mates must share another (area B) because Red Francis took over the first mate's quarters (area C). The mates are both in town, leaving Francis alone in the area. She paces her chamber while reviewing every detail of her plot.

Red Francis needs a larger crew. If she meets the adventurers alone, she attempts to enslave them. The pirate woman wears a wide finger-band of perforated gold that acts as a *ring of human influence*. She prefers to save the ring by inviting "guests" into her room and giving them rum laced with *philter of love*.

Red Francis: AC 5; MV 12; T9; hp 40; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 17, C, I 10, W 15, Ch 17; PP 60%, OL 50%, F/RT 50%, MS 55%, HS 45%, DN 45%, CW 95%, RL 45%; ML 18; AL N; leather armor, cutlass (short sword).

Red Francis is a dark woman with hair in a loose braid. Her voice is hoarse from years of shouting over the surf. She has dealt with buccaneers too long to believe anything the PCs tell her, whether it is true or not. She will talk mysteriously with the PCs to entrap them, but she has no interest in their bargains. If she cannot enchant the adventurers, she offers to stand guard at the ladder while they search the hold for "Leono's treasure." If the party accepts this plan, Francis goes above decks and immediately starts her attack (see "Anchors Aweigh"). Once at sea,



her accomplices can beat the party into submission.

If the party recognizes Red Francis's attempts to divert and trap them, a fight may erupt. The pirate defends herself masterfully in battle. All her accomplices come if she calls, and until the mutiny, Leono will defend her, too.

Red Francis is hiding five pearls (worth 100 gp each) in a felt bag under her mattress. She robbed a magician's galley shortly before her shipwreck and also has several of his magical items. Francis wears a *ring of human influence* and keeps a flagon on her belt that holds five doses of *philter of love*. Francis also wears a *ring of spell storing* that holds the spells *guards and wards*, *lightning bolt*, and *fly*. She uses the last power to escape any battle where she seems near defeat.

The mates' room contains a chest holding 1,000 sp. Captain Leono's bed has a silk pillow worth 5 gp, a silver lantern worth 10 gp, and a purse with 100 gp.

10. Bunkroom. The crews' hammocks swing from this chamber's beams. A crate of sea biscuits stands half open on

one side of the room. Ten sailors who did not have the money to go drinking snooze here. They are loyal to Captain Leono and wake up if he shouts for two rounds. Each one has a blade within reach.

Sailors (10): AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; AL N; long swords.

Anchors Aweigh

At 11:00 P.M., Red Francis and her accomplices attempt to steal the ship. Their plan calls for the following events:

Red Francis walks onto the deck and whistles once. At this signal, her accomplices on the poop deck (area 4) and quarter deck (area 5) unfurl the sails. This takes only two rounds due to previous preparation. For several frantic moments, Leono shouts questions and orders to "his" crew. As his circumstances sink in, he grips his sword and finally draws it.

While Leono yells, Red Francis uses her *ring of spell storing* to cast a *guards and wards* spell on the ship. This traps the sailors in the bunkroom (area 10) and hampers any of Leono's attempts to

retake the ship. As her optional effect, she uses a *gust of wind* behind the sails to propel the ship into the harbor. The gangplank tears off, dropping anyone on it into the water.

Once at sea, Red Francis and her accomplices subdue Leono, his crew, and any free PCs, with Red Francis using her magic as appropriate. Unless the party intervenes, the chaos keeps Leono's crew from presenting any organized defense.

When the takeover begins, tell the players only what their characters see. If the PCs are in the hold, for example, they merely see Red Francis hurry up the ladder. Several minutes later, they hear a whistle and then feel the ship heave. They discover the effects of the *guards and wards* spell as they encounter them.

Role-play the rest of the adventure to reflect the NPCs' motives and the party's actions. Leono rains curses and blows on his traitorous crew. However, his sense of drama outweighs his effect, at least until the party intervenes in the battle. The pirates want the ship, and they fight anyone who interferes. Once at sea, they plan to shanghai everyone onboard. They will not waste

time chasing anyone who jumps overboard, though, and they care nothing about Sirius.

Since this mutiny endangers both the PCs and Leono, the adventurers might join forces with the captain. The DM should take Leono's part as necessary, remembering that his main goals are to recapture his ship and keelhaul the scoundrels who betrayed him. If the party helps him, he can pay up to 1,000 gp in rewards. This money comes from his accounts with a city merchant. After the mutiny is put down, though, Leono will remember his mission for Sir Machi. If the adventurers rescue Leono and he subsequently learns about their plot to kidnap Sirius, he will feel doubly betrayed instead of grateful.

Concluding the Adventure

To return Sirius in time for Veneti's reward, the party must fight or sneak the dog off the ship while still in Chardon. If they succeed, Sirius wins the upcoming Mastiff Duel and Veneti pays the promised sum. At the DM's option, he may also reward the party with a pup that will grow into a war dog with the same statistics as Sirius.

If the adventurers cannot get off the *Gale's Teeth* before it leaves the harbor, a different adventure begins. Since Red Francis plans to enslave the PCs, they probably must escape. However, they might try to join her pirate band. If they impress the buccaneers by helping steal the ship or leading the crew to easy booty, Red Francis might make PCs full members of her crew. She feels especially safe in this if male PCs are under the influence of her philters.

The city council of Chardon will send pursuers after Red Francis if they learn of her trick. At the DM's option, these hunters might free captured PCs, or they might attack a party that has joined the pirates. If the pursuers try to rescue the PCs, they should be weak enough to make the adventurers do some fighting too. If the party has joined Red Francis when Chardon's pursuers attack, make the hunters strong enough to challenge both the PCs and the pirate crew. As another alternative, if the PCs return to Chardon, the council might hire them to recover the *Gale's Teeth*. In any of these cases, the PCs should have a ticklish time explaining why they were on Leono's ship at all.

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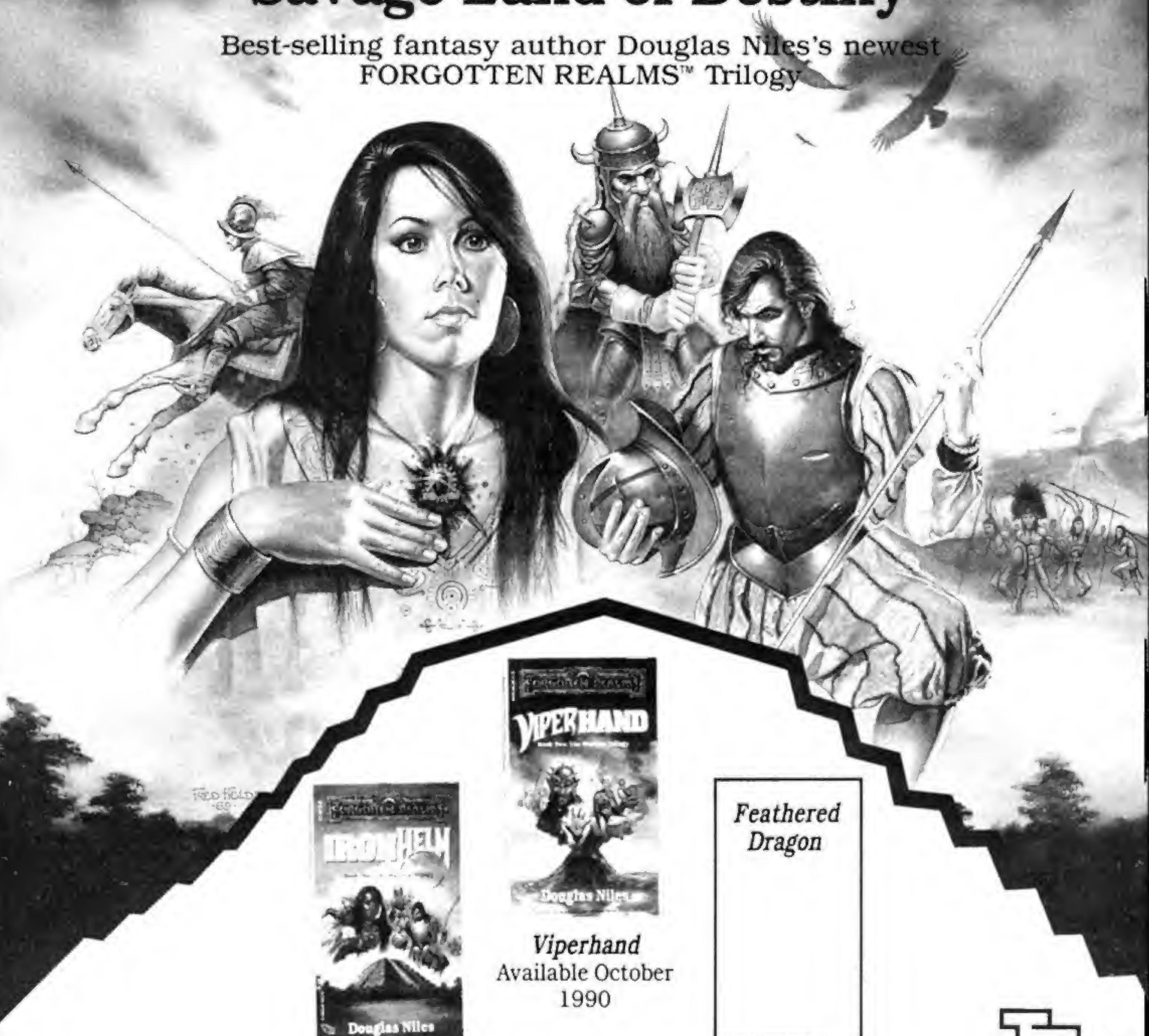
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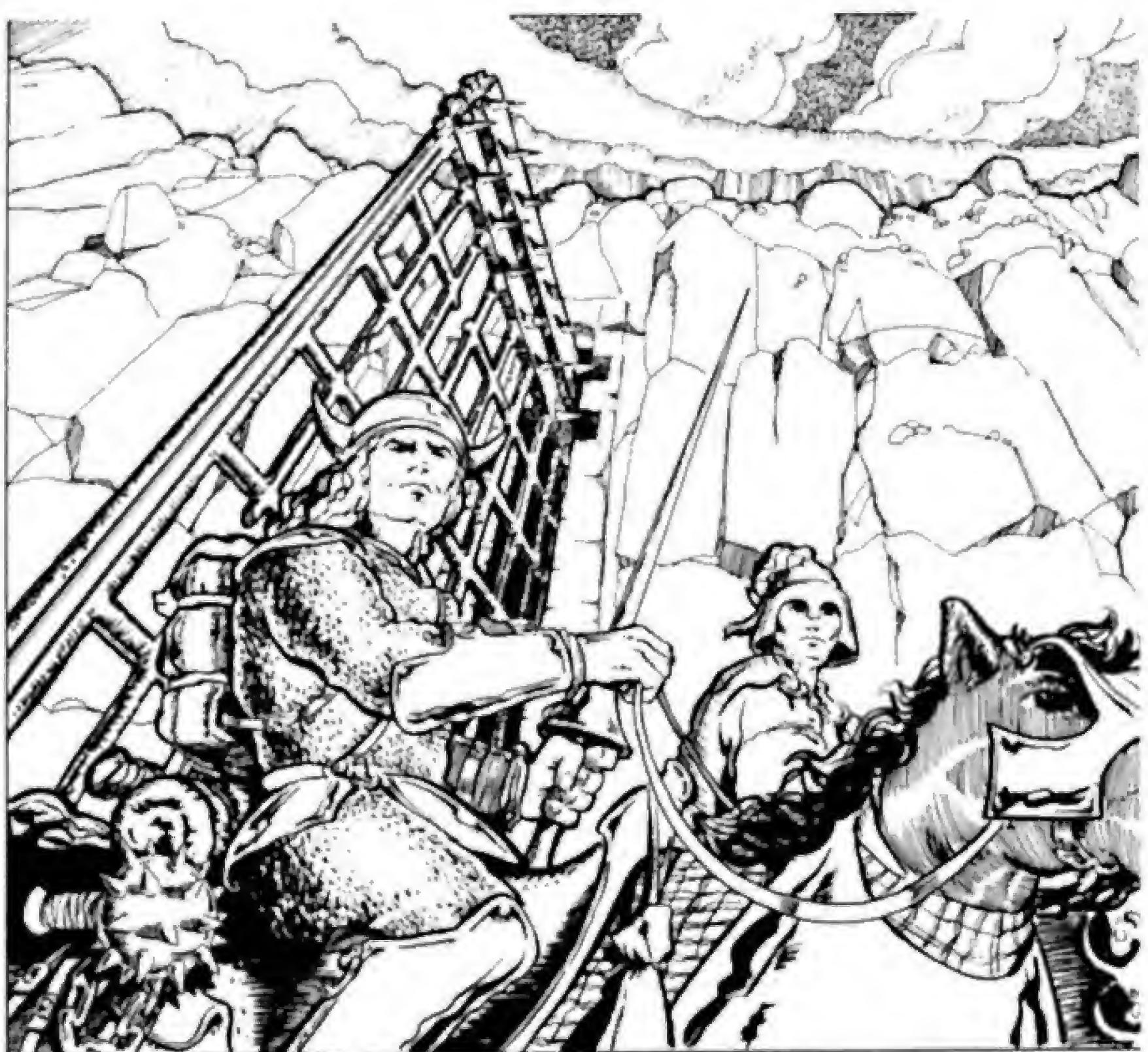


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DECEPTION PASS

BY RICH STUMP

Looks can lie as well as words.

Artwork by Jamie Lombardo

Rich Stump is currently a freshman at the University of Illinois, where he is trying to find a way to write more modules without neglecting his studies. "I decided that killer kobolds had received too much press," he said, "so I came up with killer ogre magi. I hope this will put the 'killer humanoid syndrome' to rest for good."

"Deception Pass" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4-7 characters of levels 7-9 (about 44 total levels). It is important for the party to have a wide mix of character classes. At least one wizard and one thief are recommended for the adventurers to have the best possible chance of success.

In this adventure, it is important that the DM keep the true identity of the monstrous adversaries unknown for as long as possible. The descriptions of these monsters should be carefully read, and possible actions for each planned out in advance, as their variety of powers make them formidable enemies.

Adventure Background

Over 400 years ago, the Armgion clan of dwarves came to the ore-laden regions of the Taamusk Mountains. After careful searching, the dwarves located a great rift in the mountain range—a passage 40 miles long that cut straight through the heart of the mountain chain. As this pass was conveniently located near large deposits of precious silver and gold, the dwarves settled in to mine their newfound wealth.

Ninety years after the dwarves began mining the Taamusk range, their long-time champion, Oron of Sheltac, became ill and passed away. His son, Aggrion, assumed control of the clan and set to work improving upon the small civilization that his father had created. The dwarves had begun to experience difficulty with local humanoid bands, and the two countries bordering the Taamusk Mountains had been warring against each other on and off for a century. As both nations had expressed more than a passing interest in the dwarven-held pass, Aggrion decided that defensive precautions needed to be taken. To prevent any hostile takeover of their lands, the dwarves erected a pair of great stone gates at either end of the pass and fortified the mines by constructing an outpost near them.

Aggrion continued his conservative

policies for several decades until he was approached by representatives of the two neighboring lands, Ascheria and Aldenheim. The diplomats maintained that the two nations had declared peace between them, and that now they were eager to begin trading goods. However, the majority of the existing routes through the mountains were very dangerous to merchant caravans, and the dwarves held the clearest path through the craggy Taamusk peaks. Would it be possible, the diplomats asked Aggrion, to pay for the privilege of safely passing through the dwarven pass? Aggrion was unsure of the diplomats' motives, but when they presented him with a large monetary gift and the promise of more forthcoming, Aggrion heartily agreed.

Sixty years passed, and merchants safely traveled the pass between Ascheria and Aldenheim under the watchful eyes of the dwarves. When Aggrion allowed some merchants into the dwarven halls to take refuge from a terrible storm, he began an "open-door" policy between the humans and the dwarves. Merchants were allowed to spend a night in the dwarven halls instead of camping in the pass or traveling the 40 miles all at one time. This policy stimulated trade between the dwarves and the humans. The dwarves' amiability prompted outsiders to nickname the dwarven stronghold Reception Pass, and the name stuck.

Unfortunately, Aggrion's hospitality led to his own downfall. Several years after the first merchants rested in the dwarven halls, Aggrion and his advisors were approached by Taskern, a touchy and thoroughly evil wizard who controlled one of the few wooded regions nestled among the Taamusk Mountains. Taskern wanted the dwarves to turn over some of their mines to him, as they already had plenty of ore. When Aggrion refused to give or sell any of the mines to Taskern, the mage left in a fury, vowing revenge.

A year later, Taskern disguised himself as a merchant, "hired" several of his henchmen as bodyguards, and joined a caravan that was headed through Reception Pass. No one recognized Taskern for anything other than a merchant, and he concealed his true nature with several spells. After a feast in the dwarven halls, Taskern and his servants attacked their hosts by surprise, slaying many dwarves and seriously wounding Aggrion. Taskern was finally

cornered and killed by dwarven warriors, but not before he had destroyed a great deal of the underground mines and the dwarves' trust in humans.

Greatly contributing to the dwarves' loss of trust was the reaction of the other visiting merchants during Taskern's devastation of the dwarven citadel. The dwarves expected the other merchants to come to their defense against Taskern; instead, the merchants protected only themselves, and many of them fled the dwarven home after the battle as quickly as they could.

Fearing other attacks by humans and fueled by prejudice, Aggrion ordered an attack upon nearby human settlers, whom he falsely believed were responsible. The dwarves burned three villages and an outpost before the army of Ascheria could arrive. Aggrion and his followers then disappeared deep into the Taamusk range to rebuild their civilization, abandoning Reception Pass to whomever wished to take it.

The inhabitants of both Ascheria and Aldenheim condemned the actions of the dwarves, and the commoners began referring to the passage through the mountains as Deception Pass—in memory of what seemed to them a cowardly action by the dwarves. Merchants continued to use the pass, but they were now required to defend themselves from occasional humanoid, monster, and brigand bands that wandered through the area. Several months ago, Deception Pass became a hotbed of rumors as caravans began to disappear there, only to be found destroyed later. Unless the problem is remedied, Deception Pass will be abandoned as a trade route, and the villages who profit by traffic through the pass will suffer.

For the Dungeon Master

A century ago, in a remote Oriental land, several ogre magi banded together to hatch an elaborate scheme to gain personal power. To complete their plan, the monsters stole a pan lung egg from the Waterfall of Flowers, an ancient dragon hatching ground guarded by a sect of good shukenja.

When the theft was discovered, the shukenja petitioned the Celestial Emperor for the knowledge of who was responsible for stealing the dragon egg. The Emperor became incensed upon learning of the deed, as he took a personal interest in the waterfall and the

dragons that were born there. The Emperor relayed news of the theft to Kiji-an-Jo, Watcher of the Dragon Spirits, who vowed to bring the culpable ogre magi to justice.

After a short search of the land, Kiji-an-Jo located the ogre magi as they hid in a cave. However, Kiji-an-Jo did not find the pan lung egg. Krugii, the leader of the band, had anticipated the arrival of one of the Celestial Emperor's servants and had hidden the egg in a place known only to him. Krugii refused to reveal the location of the egg unless he and his compatriots were left unpunished.

Not knowing what to do, Kiji-an-Jo returned to the Celestial Emperor with the six ogre magi. Krugii still refused to return the sacred egg; however, not even he could resist the iron will of the Celestial Emperor. Broken, Krugii returned to the secret hiding place to recover the pan lung egg. What Krugii found there doomed the six ogre magi to suffer the harsh sentence of the Emperor; the egg was gone, destroyed by an act of nature.

The Celestial Emperor was furious at this turn of events, and he banished all the guilty ogre magi. "Never again shall you harm a sacred dragon egg," said the Emperor, "for you shall never again be allowed to set foot in your homeland." This was a great blow to the ogre magi, even worse than death itself, as being exiled from their homeland entailed a great loss of honor and face for all of them. The ogre magi, who fiercely prided themselves on their honor, were devastated. Full of resentment, Krugii and his band set out for the gajin lands rumored to exist across the ocean.

After several months, the ogre magi reached the gajin lands. Without purpose they made their way across the land, killing anyone unfortunate enough to encounter them. During their wanderings, the ogre magi stumbled across the lair of a bronze dragon and slew the unlucky creature. Upon searching the cave, they discovered that the dragon had a single egg in its nest. The ogre magi, remembering the Emperor's words, decided to hatch the dragon and use it to further their dreams of conquest—thus gaining revenge against the word of the Emperor as well.

Krugii allowed the dragonet to bond itself to him after its hatching, and he named it Sablius—a crude twist upon the ogrish word for "deceit." Five years

DECEPTION PASS

after the dragon hatched, the ogre magi discovered the abandoned dwarven stronghold of Deception Pass. The ogre magi decided to move in and, upon discovering that easy prey in the form of merchant caravans passed near their home, began setting ambushes for them. To further Sablius's abilities, Krugii used a stolen *staff of withering* on him. Krugii's goal is to gain enough power to control a kingdom, with the dragon and his companions at his side.

All of the ogre magi in this adventure have the following statistics. Alterations for each individual are noted with his character description.

Ogre magi (6): AC 4; MV 9, fly 15; HD 5 + 2; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12 or by spell or weapon type; SA/SD spells and spell-like powers; ML 14; AL LE; MC (ogre). Ogre magi can fly for 12 turns, become *invisible*, cast *darkness* in a 10' radius, *polymorph* themselves into human or humanlike beings 4-12' tall, and *regenerate* 1 hp per round (lost limbs must be reattached to *regenerate*). Once per day, they may cast each of the following spell-like powers: *charm person*, *sleep*, *gaseous form* (self only), and *cone of cold* (8-64 hp damage; 60'-long cone, 20' diameter at terminus; save vs. spells for half damage).

All of the ogre magi are very intelligent and well versed in dealing with adventurers. They should be played intelligently, and Krugii, the ogre magi's leader, should be played as the DM would a favorite PC. The ogre magi thrive on deceptive tactics. Often they will disguise their powers as the effects of wands, amulets, or other magical items to conceal their true nature. All of the ogre magi use their *polymorph self* ability to its greatest advantage, and they change to various humanoid forms to confuse and taunt the PCs.

None of the ogre magi, except for Tori, care for melee combat, as they do not wish to be killed by some sword-swinging fool. Instead, they prefer hit-and-run tactics, especially under the guise of *invisibility*. If the PCs are moving around the outpost and the action is slow, a guerrilla-style crossbow attack from the rear of the party by two *invisible* ogre magi is sure to keep the PCs on their toes. The ogre magi value their lives greatly, and they will not fight a losing battle.

When an ogre mage is hit by an incapacitating spell such as *blindness* or *ray of enfeeblement*, or is wounded to under

half of its hit points, it will flee, turning *invisible* or flying if necessary to get away and *regenerate* lost hit points or wait for a spell to end. In dire straits, an ogre mage will assume *gaseous form*, particularly if it is *paralyzed* or *held*, has only a few hit points remaining, or has suffered damage while *invisible*.

When the ogre magi are in combat with the PCs, they will not only use their *invisibility* powers as often as possible, but they will *polymorph* into various humanoid forms as well. This tactic is designed to confuse the PCs so that the PCs think that they are fighting a group composed of various enemies instead of ogre magi. Note that when an ogre mage is *polymorphed*, he gains only the size, movement speed and mode, breathing mode, and manipulative abilities of the new shape assumed. No special attacks or defenses are gained; an ogre mage in the form of a vampire cannot drain life levels. The ogre mage retains his true armor class, hit points, THAC0, intelligence, and so on in his *polymorphed* form.

Krugii (AC 2; hp 52; D 16, I 17) is the leader of the ogre magi. As chieftain, he attacks and saves as a 9-HD monster. He masterminded the takeover of Deception Pass and the ambushes, and he is loath to let intruders disrupt his plans. Krugii is very intelligent, and he has learned some gajin magic from the books of a wizard that he slew years ago. Krugii can memorize and cast spells as a 5th-level wizard in addition to his ogre mage abilities. Krugii normally memorizes *magic missile* (x2), *protection from good*, *ventriloquism*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *web*, and *lightning bolt*. Krugii's high dexterity reduces his armor class to 2.

Krugii's battle tactics include waving a nonmagical silver wand (worth 100 gp) when using his innate *cone of cold* or *darkness* powers, and pretending to twist a topaz ring (worth 500 gp) when he turns *invisible*. If cornered or wounded, Krugii assumes *gaseous form*, then becomes *invisible* and flees. He may *polymorph* into a minotaur or a common oni, but his favorite form is that of a dwarf (note the possibility for deceiving the PCs!). Krugii may use his stolen *staff of withering* (nine charges) if needed.

Eli (AC 1; hp 40; D 17) is Krugii's right-hand man and informs him of any activity in the local area. Eli enjoys posing as a hermit (see "The Village of

Amril" and "Rumors in Amril") in order to learn of caravan departure dates. Eli often uses dwarven crossbows, and he has instructed the other ogre magi in their use. Eli's high dexterity makes him very dangerous with a crossbow, and his armor class is lowered to 1.

Eli carries a staff of yew that he may use to cover his innate abilities. He also owns a *necklace of missiles* with two 4-HD fireballs remaining. Eli may sneak up on intruders, toss a globe at them, and flee *invisibly* to create maximum confusion. His favorite forms are an elf or human, but he may *polymorph* into a dwarf to navigate low corridor ceilings.

Zusuka (AC 3; hp 35) is very sycophantic toward Krugii, as he wishes to replace Eli as the chieftain's lieutenant. To gain approval, Zusuka will hound the PCs at every opportunity, and he may try to capture lone PCs for Krugii. Zusuka owns a *ring of protection* +1 that lowers his armor class to 3 and doubles as his "power item." Zusuka may appear to the party as an oni or gnome, but not before he has a chance to *charm* the PCs first.

Inko (hp 32) is the most complacent of the ogre magi, being satisfied with practicing the arts of his homeland. Although he is evil, Inko is very curious about the dwarves' previous civilization and the gajin lands. His interest in these topics and his desire to learn about the land's inhabitants are the reasons that many of the ogre magi's captives are still alive. Inko, when not in his true form, may appear in the guise of an ancient Oriental man or a korobokoru (a Oriental dwarflike being).

Inko does not try to hide his powers, although he owns a *wand of wonder* (28 charges) that he loves to use. Inko's prize possession is a *fochlucan bandore* that he obtained during a caravan raid, and he plays it often.

Tori (hp 38; S 18/95) is the most aggressive of the ogre magi. He loves killing, and this quality allows Krugii to easily manipulate him. Tori enjoys *polymorphing* into an oni or fire giant; in these large forms he often hurls rocks or spears. He is the strongest ogre mage, with a +2 bonus to hit and a +5 bonus on damage. Tori uses his huge greatsword has a gilded hilt and does 3-12 hp damage vs. small- or medium-size creatures and 2-20 hp damage against large-size beings.

Ondako (hp 33) is very sly and cun-

ning, and the forms he chooses to assume reflect this. He often appears as a fox hengeyokai, a creature of his homeland. Ondako can also pass off a credible imitation of a vampire, as he has learned to mimic its appearance and mannerisms. However, Ondako does not know much about vampires and will fail standard vampire tests such as fear of holy water or of a holy symbol, and he will certainly cast a reflection in a mirror.

Ondako wears a moonstone on an electrum chain (worth 116 gp) that he uses to cover his powers. He also owns a *brooch of shielding* (30 hp of *absorption* remaining) that bears a white enamelled skull. Ondako's favored weapon in combat is a lajatang that he brought with him from his home (Dmg 1-10; consists of a 5' shaft with a crescent blade fitted at each end; used as a staff).

The Bronze Dragon

Sablius is an unusual bronze dragon, unlike any that the PCs have ever encountered. While he is six years old chronologically, his body is that of a 36-year-old dragon. This condition occurred through the judicious use of Krugii's *staff of withering*. The ogre mage has worked to corrupt Sablius to evil ways, and he has been moderately successful. However, PCs who realize that Sablius has been corrupted from his normal lawful-good alignment may be able to reform the young dragon and ease him back to his natural ways.

Sablius is loyal to Krugii, as the ogre mage represents the only "mother" figure that Sablius has known. Sablius obeys Krugii's commands, but his loyalty doesn't extend to the other ogre magi, as Krugii has tried to make the dragon distrustful of other beings. Sablius still has the inquisitive nature of a child, which means that his curiosity is unbounded. Unless Krugii is around to curtail his actions, Sablius will speak with anyone who talks to him, and he may befriend anyone who is exceptionally nice to him (ogre magi are not generally nice). Sablius is quite intelligent (though he can speak only Common and the ogre mage tongue, having learned them from the ogre magi and their captives), and he can cast spells. At this point in his life Sablius knows only one spell, *magic missile*, which he learned from Krugii and uses at the 12th level of ability.

Sablius's greatest weakness is his inexperience. Although he looks formidable, a blow with a sword makes him whimper, and he tries to fly away from combat in which he suffers over 20 hp damage. If he cannot flee, the dragon curls up, covers his head with his forelegs, and cowers from his enemies.

Sablius can relate his life story to any PCs who defeat him in combat or subdue him. He doesn't know what kind of creatures the ogre magi are, only that they are his "friends" and that humans are supposed to be his enemies. A lawful-good character that spends time with Sablius may be able to change the dragon's outlook on life; however, this may take months, or even years! Another option for reforming Sablius is to find another bronze dragon for him to live with (which would be an adventure in itself).

In combat, Sablius is dangerous. He has been taught to use his breath weapons whenever threatened, and he will definitely use his *repulsion* gas cloud if he is surrounded by multiple opponents. Good-aligned characters should be given double experience points if they attempt to reform Sablius instead of killing him.

Sablius, bronze dragon: AC -2; MV 9, fly 30, Sw 12; HD 14; hp 56; THAC0 7; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite) plus special (see MC); Dmg 1d6 + 4/1d6 + 4/3d8 + 4 plus special; SA +4 to hit with physical attacks, breath weapon (*lightning* for 8d8 + 4 hp damage, or *repulsion*), one spell (cast at 12th level); SD immune to electricity, spell-like powers; ML 11 (special); AL LN (special); MC. Sablius can naturally *breathe water* and *speak with animals*, but he has not developed his other innate powers to *create food and water*, *polymorph self*, or *cast wall of fog*. The ogre magi are unaware that he has this potential, since they had never seen a bronze dragon before.

The Village of Amril

Before the adventure can begin, the PCs must be given a reason to visit the region where Deception Pass and the trading village of Amril are located. Possible methods to achieve this include the promise of monsters to kill in the Taamusk Mountains, legends of unclaimed dwarven gold in hidden mines, or even offers of work as caravan guards to the village of Amril itself.

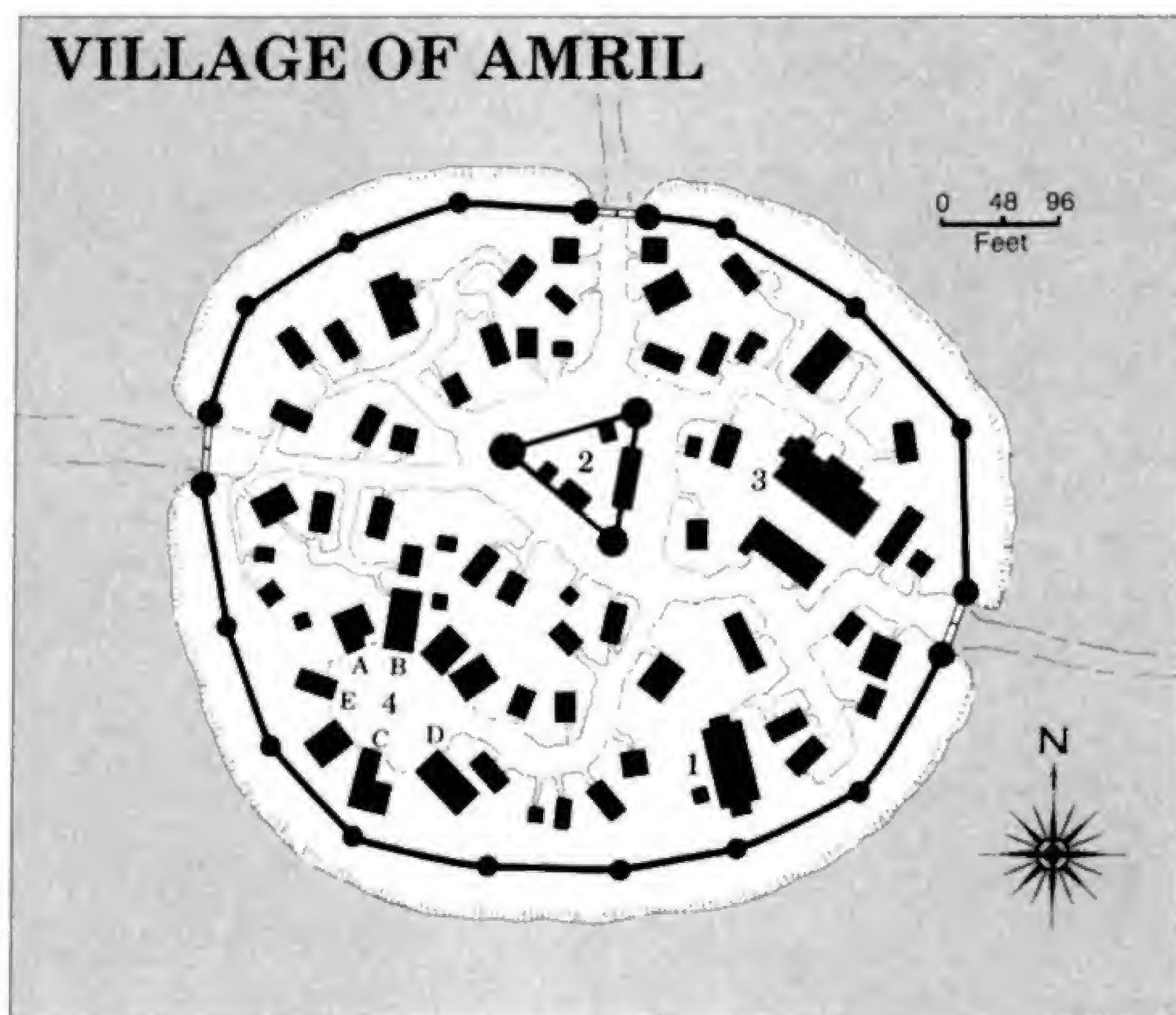
Once the PCs reach the village, they quickly learn that everything is not

well. A merchant and his entourage have been staying in Amril for a week. The merchant, Chelsby of Greensboro, refuses to leave until he is allowed to hire Amril militiamen as guards for his journey through Deception Pass. Hendrick von Holtzen, the military leader of Amril, has adamantly refused to allow this. The greatest problem is that Chelsby has offered excellent pay—more than the village can afford to give its guardsmen. This lure has interested several of the villagers, and they would be willing to brave the dangers of Deception Pass if Hendrick will allow Chelsby to hire them. Of course, this volatile situation might be alleviated if some powerful adventurers were to offer to guard the caravan or even to get rid of the threat permanently.

What the PCs and the residents of Amril do not know is that the ogre magi are aware that a caravan will leave the village soon. Eli, in his hermit disguise, wandered into Amril two days before the PCs arrived. The ogre mage discovered that Chelsby plans to enter the pass, and he quickly returned to the dwarven outpost so that Krugii might prepare an attack upon the caravan.

When the PCs reach Amril, they are directed toward the Iron Horse by helpful locals who are used to dealing with visitors. The Iron Horse is the only inn in Amril, as its reputation for good food and drink would keep other taverns from doing well in the village. The Iron Horse also serves as the meeting hall for the village council, which is in the middle of a heated debate when the adventurers arrive. Hendrick and Chelsby, as well as the citizens and businessmen of Amril, appeal to the PCs for help with their crisis. None of them want to see Amril lose its profitable business of trade. The PCs should either agree to join Chelsby's caravan as guards or decide to go in search of the monsters of the pass. See area 3, "The Iron Horse," and "Town Meeting" for more information. If the PCs do not agree to help, they may still encounter the ogre magi if the party tries to travel through Deception Pass. If they leave Amril in any other direction, the adventure is over.

Amril is a small community and trading post situated about eight miles from Deception Pass in the country of Ascheria. It is home to 250 humans and a few demi-humans, including a military force of 70 trained men-at-arms who protect



Amril from attack. The town is built on a low hill and consists of a small keep and buildings that dot the hill's slopes. Surrounding the hill is a 10'-deep trench and an 8'-high wooden palisade.

While the village has an elected council, the true leader of Amril is Hendrick von Holtsen, a decorated veteran of several humanoid wars who stands 5'8" tall. His steel-blue eyes and mental capabilities are his hallmarks. Currently, Hendrick is worried about the monsters in Deception Pass, as he has no idea what they really are. Rumors are spreading through Amril, and the populace is beginning to panic over the thought of a possible monster attack upon the village. Hendrick realizes that the situation is urgent; even if the village is not attacked, no merchants will wish to travel on a monster-filled trade route. Consequently, Amril's greatest source of income will dry up.

Because of these problems, Hendrick has had to part with several men-at-arms to escort merchants through the pass—sometimes to no avail. Now he and the citizens of Amril face a grim situation. To combat this problem, they have decided that they will pay

someone—anyone—to remove the creatures threatening their trade route through Deception Pass.

With the exception of the numbered encounter areas, the buildings of Amril are homes or storehouses for grains or equipment. It is 70% likely that any given building is a residence; if not a dwelling, a building is either a storehouse (15%), a private stable (10%), or a smokehouse/livestock storage area (5%). Residences usually contain 1-3 adult males and 1-3 adult females; it is 20% likely that any adult functions as a zero-level man-at-arms in combat (all adults are given equal opportunity to join the militia). In addition, there are 0-3 children under 14 at any residence.

The majority of the people of Amril are of lawful-neutral alignment, although there are a few citizens who are either lawful good or true neutral. The village's church (area 1) is dedicated to the worship of any deity of the land, mountains, or agriculture that the DM desires. The church's three priests are very concerned about the fate of their church and Amril; if approached in civil manner, they will aid the PCs. The church has a main temple dedicated to

the major deity of Amril, but it also includes a small shrine for worshipers of other deities.

1. The Church of Amril. This low, single-story building houses the religious facilities of the village as well as a short bell tower (the bell is rung to celebrate holidays and to warn of danger). The church is staffed by three clerics, all of whom live near the church. The main worship hall is kept open from dawn until dusk, and the alternate area of worship is opened for visitors upon request. The church has a beautiful copper and silver font suitable for creating up to 10 vials of holy water; at any given time, the church has $1d6 + 1$ vials available for sale at the price of 25 gp per vial.

The high priestess of the temple is a female half-elf named Alyria Deudrix. She and her brother, Reumont Deudrix, have been taking care of the church for the last 30 years. Recently, an adventuring cleric named Boric retired in Amril. He befriended the two half-elves and now serves as the third cleric of the church. While Boric doesn't spend a great deal of time at the church itself, he is always nearby or at his armorer's shop (area 4A).

Alyria and Reumont are initially cold to outsiders, but if they are politely approached by PCs who are on a mission for Amril, they are eager to help. Either cleric will cast spells for the PCs at 40% of the costs in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* if they are aware that the adventurers have been hired by Amril to relieve Deception Pass of its unwelcome inhabitants.

All three clerics will defend the church with their lives if it is attacked. In case such an event occurs, one cleric will try to ring the church bell; this will bring a squad of six village guardsmen, 3d6 concerned villagers, and Boric (if he is not present) in 2-12 rounds.

Alyria Deudrix (half-elf): AC 5; MV 12; C7; hp 38; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 16, C 10, I 15, W 15, Ch 13; ML 13; AL special; *bracers of defense AC 7, mace +1*; spells: *bless, cure light wounds (x 2), light, protection from evil, augury, hold person, slow poison (x 2), dispel magic, cure disease, cure serious wounds*.

Reumont Deudrix (half-elf): AC 6; MV 12; F3/C3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 16, D 15, C 15, I 12, W 14, Ch 12; ML 13; AL spe-

ial; leather armor +1, mace, long sword; spells: *cure light wounds, detect magic, command, light, speak with animals.*

The alignment of these clerics (and that of Boric, in area 4A), should be whatever good alignment matches that of the deity chosen for this land.

2. Amril Keep. This century-old fortification rests atop the highest point in the village. While it has never been besieged, the keep houses 30 men-at-arms at all times. The remainder of the militia is made up of adults who live throughout the village. Also stationed at the keep are Hendrick, his lieutenant Aryles Bowin, and four sergeants. At any one time, 1d10 + 10 men-at-arms are present at the keep; the others are out on patrol or in the village. Once a week, the entire militia drills on a field outside of town to the north.

Amril Keep is structurally sound from a defensive standpoint, as it has its own well and storehouses of food that can last 100 humans for a fortnight. The keep also contains several ballistas and a light catapult to bolster its defense.

The keep is rarely open to the citizens of Amril, but if an emergency were to occur, the majority of the populace could be sheltered inside its walls. The recent series of attacks upon caravans have prompted Hendrick and Aryles to devise an elaborate plan to defend Amril from attack by a large hostile force. (Of course, this plan of defense would be useless if the ogre magi attacked, as they could easily bypass any conventional form of defense.)

The layout of the keep is very simple and utilitarian: one three-story tower, two shorter and smaller towers, and a 12' outer wall connecting the towers in an isosceles triangle. A small gatehouse bisects the short third wall of the keep. Several buildings and two underground levels of cellars round out the grounds of Amril Keep.

Hendrick von Holtzen: AC 8 (AC 1 in armor); MV 12; F8; hp 61; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 13, I 14, W 16, Ch 16; ML 15; AL LN; long sword +2 (specialized), chain mail +2, light crossbow; 12 arrows. Hendrick usually wears normal clothing when he is in Amril, but he will wear his armor if the situation merits it (and whenever he leaves the village). Hendrick never lets his magical sword, Moondancer, leave his side; Moondancer is intelligent (I 12) and possesses an ego

of 4. It can *detect magic* or *detect evil* three times a day.

Aryles Bowin: AC 4; MV 9; F3; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 10, C 14, I 12, W 13, Ch 15; ML 14; AL LN; chain mail, shield, long bow, 12 arrows, long sword.

Sergeants (4): AC 4; MV 9; F2 (x 2), F1 (x 2); hp 18, 15, 9, 6; THAC0 19 (x 2), 20 (x 2); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, C 14, other statistics unremarkable; ML 12; AL LN; keep militia have ring mail and shield; village militia have leather armor and shield; all have spear, short bow, 12 arrows, long sword.

Men-at-arms (70): AC 6-7; MV 9; zero-level humans; hp 4-7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12+, D 10+, C 12+, all other statistics unremarkable; ML 11; AL LG, LN, N; keep militia have ring mail and shield; village militia have leather armor and shield; each has a spear, short bow, 12 arrows, and a long sword.

3. The Iron Horse. This inn and tavern is recognized as the symbol of Amril, as its hospitality is well known to merchants and traders alike who travel through these lands. The Iron Horse boasts 30 private rooms and its own small vineyard that produces some of the finest wine grapes in the area. Across the road is the Iron Stable, a large, 36-stall building where a mount or draft animal may be stabled overnight for 1-2 gp, depending on the size of the animal.

The Iron Horse owes its name to an incredible feat of endurance performed by a steed belonging to the inn's first owner, Randolph Ingram. During the final weeks of the inn's construction, the establishment was still without a name. However, Randolph was ambushed by bandits while returning from a journey. He was able to evade their trap, and he raced for the safety of Amril—15 miles away—with 20 mounted bandits in hot pursuit.

All but three of the bandits were forced to drop out of the two-hour chase that ended at the walls of Amril. There, Randolph wheeled his tired steed and slew his antagonists in mounted combat. Randolph named the inn "The Iron Horse" in honor of his steed's stamina. This tale is a favorite among the patrons of the inn, and if the PCs talk to the locals for any amount of time, it is

likely that they will hear the tale of Randolph's nameless yet honored horse.

The Iron Horse is currently owned and operated by a retired fighter, Raebaad Komerek, and his elven wizard friend, Delvon Montague. Raebaad won the inn from Randolph in a high-stakes poker game several years ago, and with the funds he and Delvon had acquired from adventuring, he created a magnificent inn that rivals the best ones in large cities. Word has spread about the Iron Horse, and it is a rare night that the taproom is not packed.

Although business at The Iron Horse has not suffered greatly yet (0-9 patrons frequent it during the day, and 6-36 at night), both Raebaad and Delvon fear that business may go bad because of the problem in Deception Pass. Because of this, the two proprietors are willing (and able) to help sweeten any reward for adventurers willing to clean up Deception Pass.

Prices in The Iron Horse are reasonable. The cost of a private double room is 2 gp per night; a single room rents for 5 gp. The prices for food and drink are roughly equivalent to those listed in the *Player's Handbook* with the exception of the house wine, which sells for 2 gp per bottle and is highly recommended among the patrons of the inn.

The village is proud of its inn to such an extent that the taproom doubles as the village meeting hall. Once a month (or more frequently if the need arises) the aleroom is packed with villagers and visitors alike to discuss important problems. It is no coincidence that the PCs arrive in Amril just when such a meeting is taking place, as the Deception Pass situation places Amril's future in great peril (see "Town Meeting").

Raebaad Komerek: AC 7 (leather apron) or AC 2 (armored); MV 12; F7; hp 50; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/09, D 15, C 14, I 13, W 12, Ch 13; ML 13; AL LN; apron, banded mail +1, short sword +2, dagger.

Delvon Montague (elf): AC 10 (AC 6 with *armor* spell); MV 12; M6; hp 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, D 14, C 13, I 17, W 15, Ch 16; ML 13; AL LN; wand of magic missiles, ring of invisibility, dagger. Delvon casts an *armor* spell on himself at all times, and he memorizes the following spells: *magic missile, detect magic, shield, light, detect invisibility, ESP, clairaudience, hold person.*

4. The Circle. This community of shops comprises the business section of Amril. All of the shops' proprietors are either Amril natives or retired adventurers. Each building is built of wood and is two stories high. Several of the buildings are not numbered on the map; these shops are minor businesses (fresh food, etc.) or other types of businesses at the DM's discretion.

During daylight hours, 5d6 villagers and traders can be found in this section of town doing business, haggling, or just loafing around the various shops. A squad of four men-at-arms is always present in the area to handle any arguments or disputes.

4A. Blacksmith and Armorer's Shop. This shop is run by the village blacksmith Jarge Holmstelt with his co-owner, Boric Brauswith, and their two assistants, Randle and Kameren. The prices for goods at this shop are 105% of the price listed in the *PHB*, although armor of higher quality than chain mail is not normally available for sale. Better armor can be ordered by Jarge, a process that requires 2-4 weeks. The blacksmiths cannot obtain plate or full plate armor. Boric is 30% likely to be at the Church of Amril (area 1) instead of at the forge.

Jarge Holmstelt: AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; AL LN; S 17, D 13, C 17, I 13, W 12, Ch 9; leather apron, hammer. Jarge is 5'7" tall, but he possesses a rather imposing build as he weighs 190 lbs. Jarge is always willing to haggle over the price of goods, and he loves a good adventuring tale.

Boric: AC 8; MV 12; C5; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; ML 14; AL special; S 16, D 13, C 15, I 10, W 14, Ch 12; leather armor, mace +1; spells: *cure light wounds* (x2), *endure heat* (x2), *light, resist fire, speak with animals, silence 15' radius, protection from fire*. Boric's alignment matches that of the other two clerics in town (see area 1).

4B. Trading Post. This building is owned by Alford Bohlswain, a cunning man in his late sixties. Alford handles all prospecting deeds, pelt trading, selling of small goods, and general supplies. Even though Alford seems sly and sneaky, he is an honest dealer and his business does well because of it. He can (and will) try to sell mining deeds to

interested parties for 50 gp; the claims are valid, but the titleholder is responsible for enforcing his own claim!

Alford is friendly to everyone he meets, and he tends to be very loquacious, especially with new customers. Most of the goods listed in the *PHB* can be found here at 110% of the listed price. Alford will barter goods with customers; he credits used goods at 50% of the price of the same item in new condition.

Alford Bohlswain: AC 10; MV 12; zero-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; AL NG.

4C. Jeweler. This small shop is the establishment of one of Amril's wealthiest citizens. The owner, Veros Gouldstorm, is a retired thief with a keen eye for items of value. He possesses the appraising and gem-cutting nonweapon proficiencies. He charges 20 gp (refundable if he purchases the item) to appraise gems or jewelry; the charge for cutting a gem is 10 gp or 5% of the gem's rough value, whichever is higher.

Veros understands the Deception Pass situation could financially ruin Amril, but he is unwilling to contribute any of his time or money to an effort against the monsters of the pass. If asked, he will sell nearly any kind of gemstone to a needy adventurer, as he owns at least two gemstones of all types worth a base of 1,000 gp or less. Veros keeps his gems in a triple-locked and trapped vault beneath his shop.

Veros Gouldstorm: AC 5; MV 12; T6; hp 28; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; AL N; S 12, D 18, C 13, I 16, W 12, Ch 12; *ring of protection +1, dagger +2*. Veros is really 35 years old, but his appearance is that of a 26-year-old man thanks to a potion of *longevity*. His attitude is aloof and cold, but he usually can overcome this when dealing with customers.

4D. Soothsayer's Home. The village soothsayer, Lyllidia, earns her living by telling fortunes for anyone who pays for the privilege. Her skills are no secret, as her ability to predict the future with accuracy is highly respected. If she learns that the PCs are planning to liberate Deception Pass, Lyllidia offers to tell each of their fortunes for 5 gp apiece. Her reading is 60% likely to act as a *portent* spell, 39% likely to be untrue, and 1% likely to act as a *vision* spell. Lyllidia may also act as a sage

with detailed knowledge of the art of prediction; however, she requests 40 gp and two days to gain divine guidance. There is a 50% chance that the knowledge gained is superfluous or false.

Lyllidia is 30 years old and very beautiful, but she has taken a vow of chastity in order to maintain the powers that she possesses. She has many spiritual trinkets in her possession for sale, and she will always try to make a sale.

Lyllidia: AC 9; MV 12; zero-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 7, D 15, C 13, I 14, W 15, Ch 15; ML 9; AL N; dagger.

Rumors About Deception Pass

When the PCs accept an offer to become caravan guards or to liberate Deception Pass, they may desire to learn more about recent events from the inhabitants of Amril and any traders and merchants currently there.

Roll 1d6 when the PCs question a possible source of information. On a roll of 1, that person has nothing interesting to tell. On a 2 or a 3, the individual knows one rumor; a 4 or 5 means that the person knows two rumors; on a 6, the person knows three rumors. Unless the contact is aware that the PCs are on a mission for Amril, he has a 50% chance of asking for compensation of no less than 1 sp per rumor (the person recognizes that the PCs are not locals).

Roll 1d100 and consult the "Rumors in Amril" sidebar for each rumor that the PCs hear. Not all of the rumors are true. If the PCs think to question everyone present at the town meeting, they will learn eight rumors (duplications are possible).

Town Meeting

This encounter is designed to introduce the PCs to the situation surrounding Deception Pass and to spur them onward to the completion of the adventure. When the adventurers reach Amril, the guards at the gate direct them to the Iron Horse Inn. The PCs should reach Amril near or after dusk, as a night arrival will coincide with the town meeting and insure that the PCs will not look elsewhere in the village for amusement.

As the PCs approach the stable, they can hear a loud argument coming from the tavern. Begin to read the following passage to the players. If the PCs jump into the discussion, some of the reading

Rumors In Amril

Die Roll	Rumor	Die Roll	Rumor
01-05	1	54-56	16
06-10	2	57-60	17
11-13	3	61-64	18
14-19	4	65-68	19
20-21	5	69-72	20
22-24	6	73-74	21
25-27	7	75-77	22
28-31	8	78-80	23
32-33	9	81-82	24
34-37	10	83-86	25
38-40	11	87-88	26
41-43	12	89-92	27
44-47	13	93-95	28
48-49	14	96-97	29
50-53	15	98-00	30

1. The dwarves have returned to Deception Pass as an act of revenge. (False)
2. Last week, two sheep disappeared. (True, but unrelated.)
3. There is a hermit who comes into town every so often; he was here recently. (True, but the hermit was really the ogre mage Eli.)
4. The crops haven't been doing well in the last month. (True, but unrelated.)
5. Some people claim to have seen a dragon in the area recently. The dragon's color was not noted; only its silhouette was seen. (True; this was Sablius.)
6. The dwarven stronghold in Deception Pass is being used for evil purposes. (True, but an unremarkable guess.)
7. The humanoids who live north of Deception Pass are massing for an attack upon Amril. (False)
8. Lyllidia, the soothsayer, could tell you the nature of the creatures in Deception Pass. (False; she doesn't know anything about them.)
9. Hendrick really wants to see Amril fail as a village; he hates his work. (False)
10. Delvon, one of the proprietors of the Iron Horse, is really a spy for the dwarves who still live in the mountains. (False)

11. Several guards from a recently destroyed caravan were found frozen to death, but the weather had been warm for weeks! (True; one of the ogre magi used his *cone of cold* power to destroy the guards.)
12. The ghost of an evil wizard stalks the ruins. (False)
13. Many treasures still lie unclaimed in the dwarven stronghold. (True—a good guess.)
14. If one more caravan is destroyed, the merchant's guild in the capital will refuse to use Deception Pass as a trade route. (True)
15. Several caravans had to pay a fee to a large, one-eyed giant to avoid being destroyed in Deception Pass. (Partially true; the creature was Tori polymorphed into oni form.)
16. There is a secret passage through the Taamus Mountains that leads to the dwarves' stronghold. (False; the pass doesn't go *through* the mountains.)
17. Hendrick cannot spare men to accompany caravans through the pass because too many have been killed on earlier excursions. (True)
18. Not every caravan is attacked; a few have traveled the pass safely. (True; several caravans were completely ignored by the ogre magi because they did not want to prematurely dry up their supply of prey.)
19. Orcs are controlling the dwarven stronghold. (False)
20. A fire-breathing dragon has been attacking the caravans! (False)
21. The monsters in Deception Pass will attack again soon. I feel it in my bones. (True—a good guess.)
22. There are many entrances into the dwarven caverns, but beware—I'm sure that they're trapped as well. (Partially true; there is only one entrance, and it is trapped.)
23. The other night I was sitting in front of my campfire with a friend and I heard some noises behind me. I turned around and saw a grinning man with long canine teeth. I think it was a vampire! He disappeared before I could get another good look at him. (True; the "vampire" was the ogre mage Ondako.)
24. I heard that a guard on one of the caravans tried to fight off an attacking giant. He looked into the giant's eyes and turned to stone! (False)
25. There's shape-changin' monsters in those mountains, and if I were you, I'd buy me some wolfsbane to protect me from the were-beasts that prowl around. (Partially true and a good guess, but wolfsbane will be of no help.)
26. A merchant who tried to cross Deception Pass told me that a dragon destroyed one of his wagons with a great blast of ice before his very eyes! (Partly true; the frost was a *cone of cold* cast by Krugii; the merchant's recollection of the event was not clear, as he didn't see where the ice came from.)
27. A hermit lives in the wooded vale south of the pass. Don't disturb him—he owns a powerful magical staff. (True, but the staff has been stolen by Krugii; see area B of "Deception Pass.")
28. There may be other obstacles besides whatever monsters reside in the keep. Humanoids in the north may control parts of the pass, and some caravans have had to deal with attacks by wolves. (True)
29. It is very probable that some creature from the lower planes, with help from a wizard, is behind the mischief in the pass. (False).
30. The hermit in the mountains is directing the caravan attacks; I've seen him snooping around in town before caravans have left Amril. (False; the "hermit" who comes to town is really the ogre mage Eli in *polymorphed* form.)



may not be necessary; use your best judgment to incorporate the PCs into this situation.

"It's been loud ever since the meeting started," says the stable boy as he takes the reins of your horses. "They've been arguing about one thing or another for the past three meetings. You can go on in and get some food and drink, and listen to the meeting if you like—I can never make heads or tails of what they're arguing about."

After paying the boy for his services, you walk toward the huge two-story building across the road. The sounds of arguing grow louder; all of the doors and windows in the common room are wide open. You soon understand why, as you see that the aleroom is packed full of people. As you go in through the main door, your senses are assaulted by the noise, the commotion, and the odors. Intricate carvings decorate the walls and colorful shields hang over the bar, each one bearing the image of a

silver-gray horse. The smells of good ale, wine, and roast pig fill the air, and it seems like all the people of Amril have crowded into this room.

The arrangement of benches and tables suggest that a meeting is taking place. Over 100 people have packed the room, and the center of their attention is a man of average height yet imposing nature; his steely blue eyes seem to sweep across the entire room. Seated near this man are several older men and women, members of the town council. The remainder of the crowd is scattered about the taproom.

Not wishing to stand out, you quickly sit down on some unoccupied benches near the door. After whispering some questions to the locals sitting near you, you learn that the majority of Amril's important citizens are present, and some merchants and traders are here as well. The purpose of this meeting is to decide on a course of action that concerns the fate of the village. Your acquaintance says something else,

but the noise level in the room prevents you from understanding his words.

As you prepare to ask the man to repeat himself, the ear-splitting sound of crockery being shattered pierces the air, silencing the noisy crowd. You look around to determine the source of the interruption and realize that the steely eyed man is responsible for this unwholesome action. His face is set in an expression of contempt, daring anyone to chastise him. The man kicks the crockery shards out of his way and begins to speak:

"With apologies to our fine inn, my friends, I find it necessary to regain a measure of control over this important meeting. All of you realize the gravity of our situation, including our merchant friends who see fit to use our fair town as a stop on their trading route. However, Amril lacks the manpower to defend caravans of any sort, mercantile or otherwise, through Deception Pass. We must look to ourselves now."

Even before he finishes, several men, presumably merchants, jump to their feet and shout: "How can you say such a thing?" "We need protection too!" "What kind of a leader do you call yourself, von Holtsen?" "Do you want to drive us out of Amril forever?" Eventually, the merchants are calmed by other patrons and sit down, but one well-dressed man remains standing.

"Hendrick von Holtsen," the merchant begins drolly, "I can understand your position. Obviously Amril needs to defend itself against a possible threat, although nothing has threatened this town since it was founded. However, as a merchant and contributing businessman of Amril, I cannot accept the challenge of attempting to move a caravan full of merchandise on a monster-infested trade route. An undefended caravan is easy prey for any antagonist—human, monstrous, or otherwise."

"The situation would be easily remedied if mercenaries were to accompany my own wagons, and those of others, through the pass. I do not understand your recalcitrance, as I have offered more than ample payment to anyone skilled enough to guard my caravan, including Amril's militiamen. Hendrick, surely you can spare five willing men—I'll compensate both Amril and the men themselves for their trouble in gold and platinum." With a flourish, the merchant displays several thick, greasy coins between his right thumb and forefinger. "Now, who wishes to join the caravan of Chelsby of Greensboro?"

In an instant, the taproom turns to pandemonium. Men and women begin shouting, a fistfight breaks out, and a score of heated arguments develop.

At this point, the PCs may decide to resolve Amril's problem by volunteering their services, or they may elect to act in another way—possibly starting a brawl! If the PCs choose a violent course of action, the DM should remind them that their acts would not be well received by the townspeople, and that the entire village might turn against them.

After a time that seems to last forever, order is restored. Hendrick von Holtsen speaks anew. This time his words are

not sharp and crisp; instead, they are imploring and entreating.

"I understand there are many viewpoints to be considered on the issue of our trade route. However, I am first and foremost responsible for the welfare of our village. If I let more of our citizens meet their doom at the hands of the monsters in Deception Pass, it will prove nothing. It is necessary that our merchants and traders be able to use Deception Pass safely; however, it is also necessary that Amril be defended. If there were only some powerful mercenaries to help us, then we might have a solution."

Suddenly, an elderly man sitting near your group stands up. "Hendrick! Here's your mercenaries!" With a sinking feeling you realize he is speaking about you. As you look around, you see that all eyes are upon you.

At this point, the PCs may offer their services to the citizens of Amril or to the merchant Chelsby. If they remain quiet, Chelsby entreats them for aid, offering a great sum of money if the adventurers are obviously of great skill. Hendrick and the merchants of Amril will also try to hire the PCs to destroy the monsters of Deception Pass if they refuse to accompany Chelsby as guards.

Allow the PCs to bargain with Hendrick or Chelsby for payment, but remember that Amril is willing to pay brave mercenaries to alleviate its problem, not just escort one caravan through the pass. Between the merchants and the coffers of Amril, a great reward can be offered to the PCs, but they must provide proof that future caravans will not be molested.

Chelsby initially offers the PCs a payment of 25 gp each, with an extra 50 gp upon successfully escorting his caravan through Deception Pass. The businessmen of Amril cannot offer the same amount of coinage that Chelsby can, but they have a large supply of goods behind them. If the PCs can liberate Deception Pass, they will be paid 20 gp in coins and 50 gp in goods and services each, and they can keep any treasure that they find in the pass.

If the PCs bargain for a larger reward, Raebaad Komerek says he will hold a celebration in their honor if they are successful. He also offers each PC a keg of fine aged wine (worth up to 6 gp per

keg if the PCs are cheap enough to sell them). Chelsby can sweeten the pot by 20 gp more per PC, but he would rather give them mercantile goods (he deals in spices, foodstuffs, and cloth) before parting with an overly large sum of money. The PCs should eventually realize that, while the town may not be able to provide a fee worthy of their stature, it desperately wishes to have its problem remedied at nearly any cost. If the PCs don't realize this or are just plain greedy, the adventure could be very short indeed.

The Caravan

Once the PCs agree to help Chelsby and Amril, the merchant informs the PCs that they will leave in one day—time enough for them to replace any needed equipment, pick up some rumors (if they think to do so), and ready themselves for the trip. During this time, Hendrick or his lieutenant, Aryles Bowin, can fill the PCs in on the history of Deception Pass and what is known of the current situation there, if asked. On the morning of the second day, Chelsby awakens the PCs at dawn, as he is very nervous about the journey and wants to complete the trip as quickly as possible.

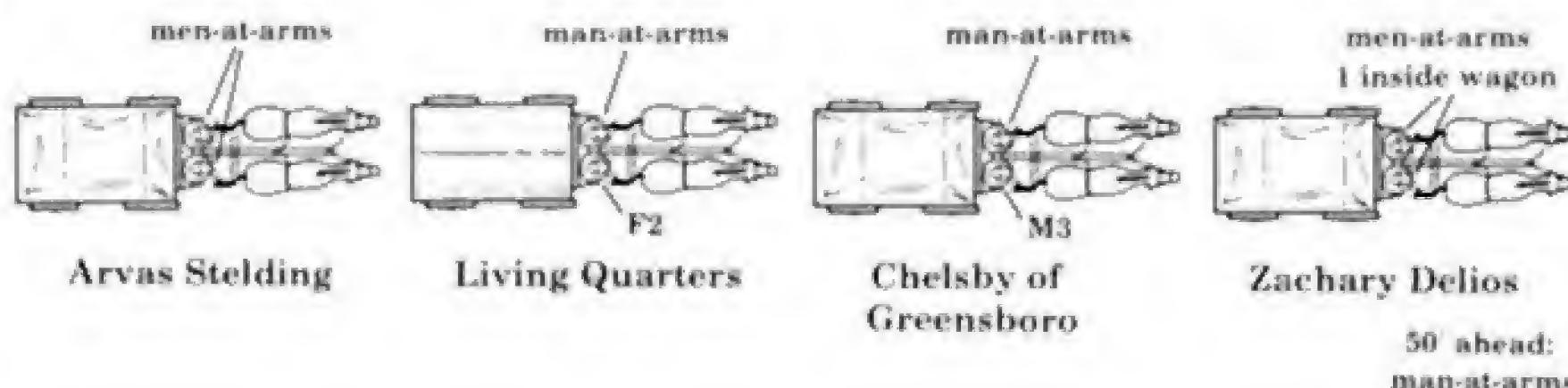
Chelsby's caravan consists of four wagons, eight hired men-at-arms (not from Amril), a few mercenaries, and two fellow merchants. Three of the wagons have canvas roofing, but Chelsby's wagon looks like a small hut on wheels. It has been outfitted with a door, windows, and shutters. Written on both sides of the wagon in green and gold lettering are the words "Chelsby of Greensboro, Master Merchant."

The caravan will travel through Deception Pass in a set formation. The first wagon contains the spices and wines of Zachary Delios, one of Chelsby's merchant partners. Two men-at-arms ride on the driver's seat, while a third sits inside the wagon itself.

The second wagon contains the various silks, cloths and expensive food-stuffs of Chelsby, guarded by another man-at-arms and Wordal, a 3rd-level wizard. Wordal was hired to defend the wagons against attacks, and his spell selection reflects this.

The third wagon in line contains a sort of office for Chelsby, Zachary, and the third merchant, Arvos Stelding. The three merchants spend the journey inside this wagon unless the caravan

CHELSBY'S CARAVAN



stops for any reason, such as to camp or when the ogre magi spring their ambush. Kept inside the wagon are the caravan's payroll and each merchant's funds (a total amounting to roughly 300 gp), logbooks detailing business transactions, personal belongings, and other tools of the merchant trade. Hidden beneath the wagon is a padded and locked iron box that contains three potions of *healing* for use in an emergency. The only key to the box is held by Chelsby. A man-at-arms and a hired 2nd-level fighter control this wagon's dray horses.

The fourth wagon contains the weapons and goods of Arvas Stelding and is driven by two men-at-arms. The eighth man-at-arms and another 2nd-level fighter ride 50' ahead of the first wagon to give advance warning should the caravan be attacked. Chelsby suggests that some of the PCs ride in the wagons and others ride on horseback so that the latter might be able to quickly move to the location of any threat against the caravan wagons.

Before the caravan reaches the pass, the DM should ask the players to declare their PCs' locations in the caravan train (for example: "My wizard is riding in the first wagon," "Colin the Ranger is riding to the left of the second wagon," etc.). Use the diagram of Chelsby's caravan above to make this task simpler, as PC position could make a great deal of difference when the ambush encounter is run.

Chelsby: AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; I 15; Ch 16; ML 12; AL N; long sword.

Wordal: AC 9; MV 12; M3; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; I 16; D 15; ML 12; AL N; dagger; spells: *sleep*, *magic missile*, *web*.

Merchants (2): AC 10; MV 12; zero-level humans; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; AL N; unarmed.

Men-at-arms (8): AC 4; MV 9; zero-level humans; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; AL NG; chain mail, shield, long sword, short bow.

The DM may wish to consider handing over the NPC caravan members to players, allowing them to set the mercenaries' positions in the caravan and direct them in combat. This will greatly reduce the DM's workload for the ambush at encounter area E in Deception Pass. However, the DM should still be the final authority on the NPCs' actions; none of the men-at-arms would suicidally charge an enemy or continue to attack if badly wounded, for example.

Deception Pass

The pass itself is a naturally formed crevasse that runs the length of the Taamusk Range. Deception Pass is 42 miles long; travelers using the pass must spend at least two days to completely traverse its length. The mountain walls rise from 110'-300' above the pass; if the height of the cliff walls needs to be determined at any time, roll 1d20, add 10, and multiply the result by 10 to determine the height in feet.

There is no random encounter table for the trip from Amril to Deception Pass or for the pass itself. If the DM feels such encounters would help the pace of the adventure, he can add them as needed. Reasonable encounters might occur with a group of bandits, several trappers, or even a band of humanoids tailored to the PCs' abilities. Such encounters may shroud the identity of the Deception Pass monsters in even more mystery.

A. The Great Gates of Oron. At these locations in the pass, pairs of gigantic iron gates were built into the mountainside. Their original purpose was to slow the advance of any army through the pass, but time and neglect have taken their toll; the once-mighty gates stand rusted and broken.

The gates are 15' high and 25' wide, and they bear the name of the greatest dwarven hero of the tribe's history: Oron of Sheltac. When the gates were in operation, they could be dragged out of the cliff walls on iron rails and bolted shut. The mechanisms that originally made this a simple task have rusted away, and the gates now sit in their moorings, immovable due to their great weight. A space about 30' wide lies open between each pair of gates; the caravan wagons can easily pass between them over their rusty rails.

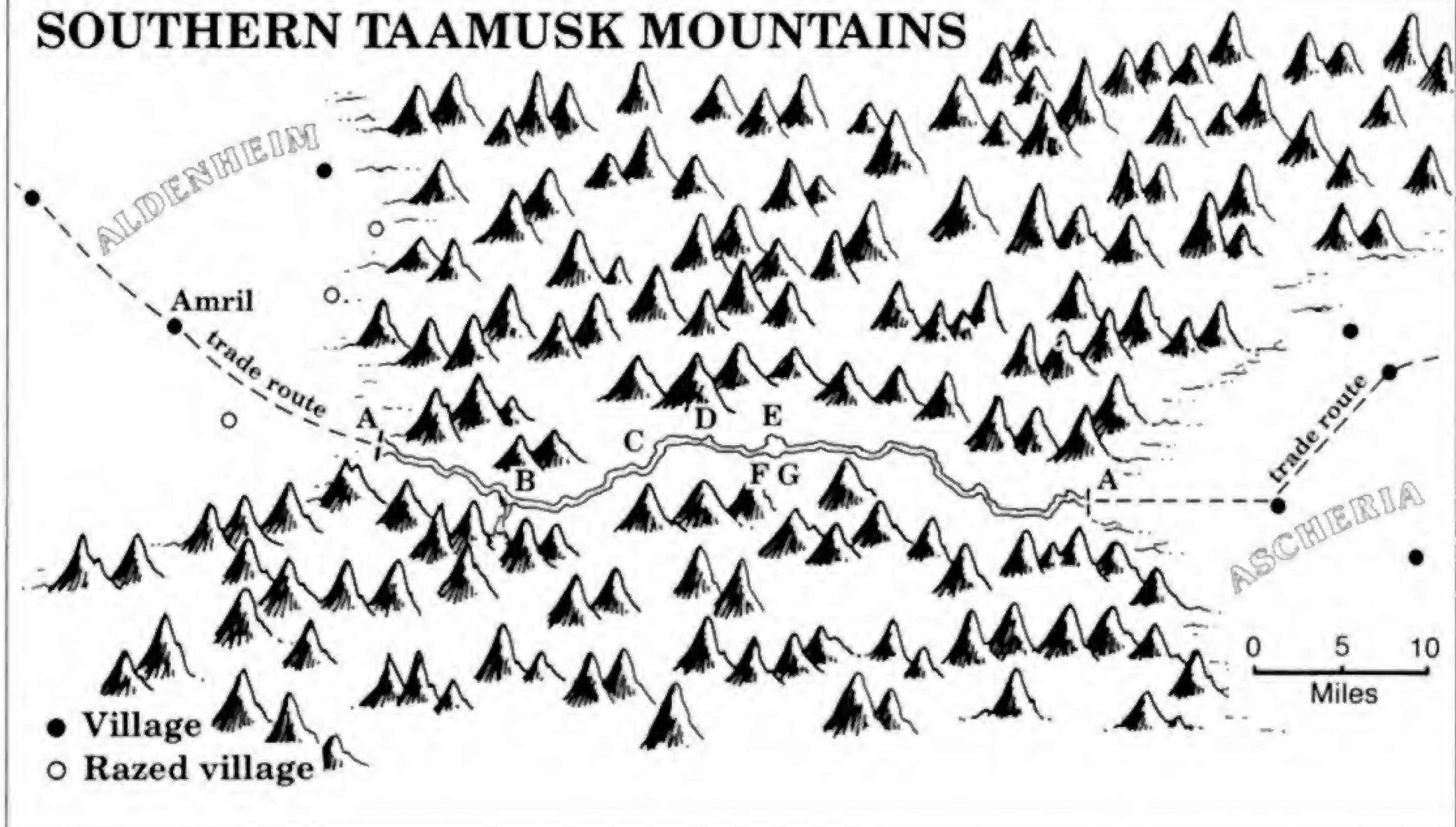
Unknown to the PCs and the caravan members, an *invisible* Ondako is spying on them from atop the southern gate. He watches the caravan pass through the gate, determines its composition (number of possible spell-casters, heavily armored fighters, etc.) and returns to the outpost so the ambush may be set. If the PCs somehow notice him, Ondako flees into the mountains to lose any pursuers before reporting back to Kru-gii. He will not fight the PCs unless he is cornered or chased by a lone pursuer.

B. Abandoned Stairs and Hermit.

At this point in Deception Pass is a crumbling, narrow staircase originally built by the dwarves. It is over 300' long and climbs 125' to a small plateau that cannot be seen from the pass floor. If the PCs inquire about the stairs, one of the mercenaries remarks, "That's where the hermit is supposed to live—but no one's ever gone up there to find him." Chelsby becomes angry if the PCs express any curiosity about the stairs or the hermit; he wants them to stick to business. PCs who decide to search for the hermit will not be able to return to the caravan in time for the ogre magi attack unless they have a means of movement that is much faster than walking.

Any PCs who climb the stairs or fly up the cliff face find a small cleared area roughly 100' in diameter. At the edge of this plateau farthest from the steps is a crevice that winds for 1½ miles between two mountains to a small wooded valley. Just inside the entrance

SOUTHERN TAAMUSK MOUNTAINS



to this valley is the camouflaged home of the druidic hermit Histellwyn, who is spying on the PCs as they enter the valley. Histellwyn reveals himself to the PCs only if he feels that they have no hostile intentions.

Histellwyn answers questions concerning Deception Pass in exchange for usable goods such as food or leather sacks. He knows that "huge, misshapen beings" reside in the dwarven keep, and he thinks that they have at least one elf or half-elf in league with them (he has seen Ashlor, the ogre magi's charmed guard, several times). Histellwyn can also tell the PCs that he has not visited Amril for three months, as he has tried not to arouse the attention of the monsters. This fact should be an important clue to PCs who heard that the hermit had visited the village recently. Histellwyn can confirm the presence of a dragon, but he is unsure of its type. Finally, Histellwyn tells trustworthy PCs that a powerful magical staff of yellowish wood was stolen from him two months ago. He is sure that the monsters in the dwarven outpost are responsible for its theft.

The hermit would like to see the PCs

destroy the creatures that now terrorize the pass, and to have his magical staff returned to him. He offers the PCs a *cloak of the manta ray* that he acquired long ago but has no real use for if they return his staff. Histellwyn believes that the monsters of the pass are giants, having seen one in oni form; this may confuse the PCs when they encounter the ogre magi. Histellwyn will not reveal that he is a druid unless the PC party includes a druid or ranger.

Histellwyn: AC 6; MV 12; D6; hp 33; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 14, D 16, C 13, I 15, W 14, Ch 16; ML 14; AL N; staff, scimitar, *ring of protection* +2. Histellwyn's spells may be chosen by the DM, but he always has *animal friendship*, *speak with animals*, *obscurement*, and *barkskin*.

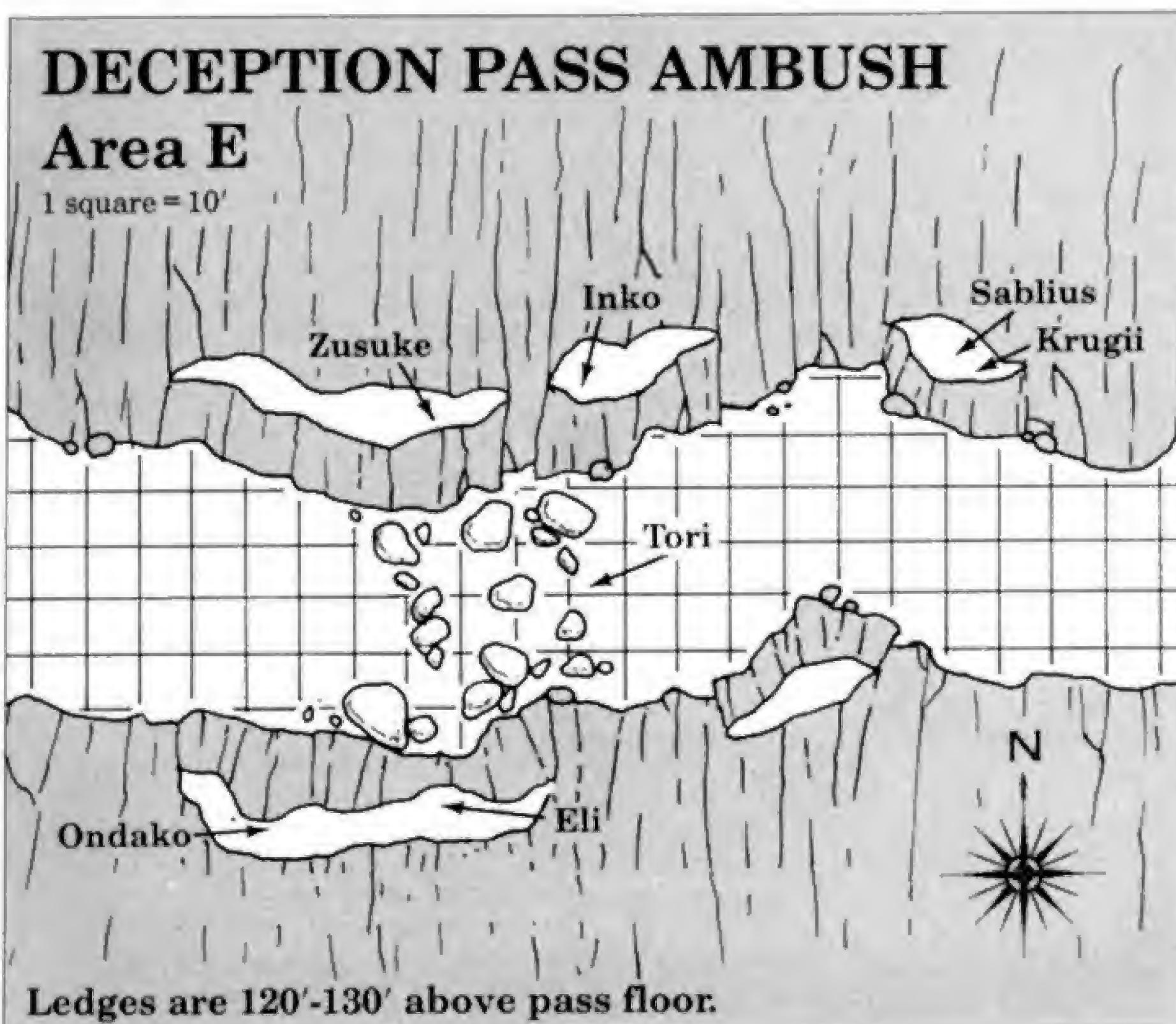
C. Dead Caves. At this location in Deception Pass, small cave openings can be seen high up on the cliff faces. Each cave is from 10'-60' above the floor of the pass, and all are naturally formed from shifts in the rock that occurred long ago. No monsters can be found in these caves, which are little more than

crevices in the rock walls. There is a 50% chance that each of the six "caves" at this location is inhabited by a small flock of birds or bats; otherwise, the caves are empty.

D. Stirge Cave. At this location in the pass, a cave mouth yawns in the northern wall 9' above the ground. The cave appears innocuous, but anyone venturing inside is in for a surprise. Nesting on the ceiling of this 10'-diameter cave is a group of 11 stirges. These creatures are nocturnal, but they attack anyone entering their cave and pursue intruders for 1-4 rounds during the day. At night they are out hunting and the cave is empty. Nothing of value can be found in the stirges' cave.

Stirges (11): AC 8; MV 3, fly 18; HD 1 + 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA blood drain; ML 8; AL N; MC.

E. Ambush. The pass begins to narrow, and it is here that the ogre magi attempt to exploit or destroy the caravan. Sablius and the ogre magi have carefully prepared an obstacle for the wagons. *Invisible*, they set the ambush for the caravan and wait. Read the



following paragraph to the players when the caravan reaches this point:

Up ahead, the ground seems to be littered with pieces of scree and rock, as if a small rockslide had occurred recently. Several large slabs of stone create an even narrower opening in the already cluttered pass; it will be difficult to move the wagons through unless the rocks are removed.

The PCs can attempt to drive the wagons over the rockslide and risk breaking an axle and wasting valuable time, or they can clear away the rock and spend even more time. Chelsby is in favor of trying to cross the rocks, and he orders his hired men to do so unless the PCs protest. If the PCs get rid of the rocks through the use of magic such as *stone shape* or *transmute rock to mud*, Chelsby is pleased at the prowess of his hired guards. However, Tori immediately begins the ambush should the PCs elect such an action.

If the caravan attempts to cross over the rock slabs, the second wagon breaks an axle as it rolls over the rocks (the DM should pretend to roll for a successful

crossing, but the failure always occurs; repair work takes 20 man-hours). Otherwise, 60 man-turns of work are required to clear a path through the rubble. In either case, an interruption occurs after one turn of rock clearing or while the caravan members attempt to fix the wagon's axle. When this happens, read the following:

From behind a pile of rocks where you are certain nothing stood a minute ago, a one-eyed giant appears. This 10'-tall creature has dull reddish-brown skin, wears a giant black breastplate, and wields a huge, wicked sword. With a deep laugh, the giant surveys the caravan and speaks to all of you at once.

"Welcome, miserable travelers! I see that you are having a bit of difficulty on your journey. I have a proposition for you. Give me a ransom of 3,000 pieces of gold, or my friends and I shall destroy you!" The cyclopic monster stares at you, his greatsword raised and his muscles tense, showing his distrust of your actions.

Upon hearing this, Chelsby shouts, "Destroy the monster!" as he doesn't want to pay such a large sum of money to a "vile giant." If the party begins to parley with the cyclops (which is really the ogre mage Tori polymorphed into oni form), their attempts are ignored. Instead, Tori tries to *charm* the nearest PC who is looking at him. If a PC or NPC is successfully *charmed*, Tori commands him to convince the other PCs and Chelsby to pay the ransom.

It is very likely that the PCs will refuse to give in to Tori's demands. If the PCs are openly hostile (a situation that Tori is expecting), the "cyclops" growls, "Okay, you asked for it!" Following this he yells "Shamut!" (a nonsense word that he hopes will be mistaken for a command word), turns *invisible*, and flies upward and over the caravan until he is behind the last wagon. By doing this he hopes to convince the PCs that he possesses an *invisibility*-inducing magical item. His actions are also the signal for the ambush to begin. Remember that any attack by an *invisible* creature dispels the *invisibility*.

Round 1: Tori turns *invisible* and flies over and behind the caravan wagons. Sablius and Krugii (both *invisible*) silently glide toward the caravan from their ledge, gaining a -4 adjustment to surprise rolls. Sablius breathes *lightning* at a group of powerful-looking PCs while Krugii uses his *cone of cold* to blast anyone casting a spell. The other ogre magi ready their attacks for the next round, and the NPC mercenaries and Wordal run for cover and draw weapons.

Round 2: Ondako and Inko (both *invisible*) swoop down on unsuspecting PCs and drop large rocks on their victims' heads (3-18 hp damage). Eli fires two preloaded heavy crossbows from his position atop the pass, as his high dexterity allows him to do this with speed and accuracy. His target is an unarmored PC or one who is flying in the pass. The rocks surrounding his position provide Eli with 50% cover (-4 to armor class). Eli has one more heavy crossbow and two light crossbows remaining, all preloaded.

An *invisible* Zusuke flies down into the pass and attempts to *charm* an isolated or fleeing NPC. He orders the *charmed* NPC to cease resistance and toss away all of his weapons. Tori waits for a spell-caster to reveal himself.

whereupon he flies over and *invisibly* attacks the mage or priest from behind. Sablius flies up out of the pass so he can turn around and attack the caravan again (if necessary). Krugii turns *invisible* again.

Any surviving mercenaries must make morale checks or flee unless the PCs have effectively repelled the ogre magi. If the NPCs' morale is good, they help fight the ogre magi and dragon with missile weapons. Wordal, if still alive, tries to cast a *magic missile* spell at any visible ogre mage.

Round 3: Tori continues to fight his chosen target or selects one to attack if he hasn't already done so. Krugii casts a *magic missile* or *Melf's acid arrow* spell at an armored or severely wounded PC. Ondako tries to *charm* a PC if he is not in danger of being harmed. Eli fires one heavy crossbow and one light crossbow from atop the pass, and Inko uses his *wand of wonder*; if an adverse effect occurs, he immediately leaves for the outpost.

Zusuka attempts to *charm* another NPC or PC unless threatened, in which case he unleashes a *cone of cold* against his antagonist. Sablius wheels in the air this round unless he is wounded, in which case he flies back to the outpost. Morale checks may be necessary for any NPCs who are still alive. Wordal hides if he has already been killed.

Round 4 and after: Sablius strafes the caravan with another breath weapon attack, favoring *repulsion* over *lightning* if the PCs have spread themselves out. Eli fires and reloads his remaining light crossbow. If the fight breaks up, he gathers up his bows (all of which are tied together) and flies off. The other ogre magi continue the combat more or less as per round 3. If more than a third of the NPCs are *charmed* or killed, the rest try to hide or flee.

Throughout the combat, the ogre magi play a cat-and-mouse game, utilizing their magical abilities and turning *invisible* as often as possible. None of them try to enter melee combat (with the exception of Tori) unless the odds appear to be in their favor. The assault continues until the PCs and caravan guards are driven off, surrender, or die. The ogre magi will also break off their attacks if they are injured. Any time an ogre mage drops below two-thirds of its hit points, it turns *invisible* (or into *gaseous form* first if in serious trouble), and attempts to flee. The ogre magi also

retreat to the outpost if faced with an obvious show of magical power.

If the PCs are defeated, the ogre magi raid the caravan and take any prisoners back to the outpost, locking them in room 21. If the PCs repel the assault, Chelsby crawls out from his hiding place in the third wagon and demands that the PCs vanquish "the scum who attacked my caravan!" Most good-aligned PCs should be honor-bound to do this; if they express reluctance, the hint of treasure should prod the party into action. The PCs should be able to guess that the monsters are lairing in the dwarven outpost. If they go in search of the ogre magi, the caravan will retreat to the Gates of Oron to set up camp for two days, and to retreat to Amril if the PCs fail to return.

F. Dwarven Mines. At one end of this natural valley in Deception Pass lie several of the ancient dwarven gold mines. The outpost and the dwarves' main entrance into the caverns and chambers of their once-great empire are situated on the opposite side of the valley, exactly three-quarters of a mile apart. Iron tracks and wooden ties once spanned the distance between the mines and the dwarven stronghold, but all that remains are an occasional rotted wooden tie or a small piece of rusted iron. Originally, five mines were accessible from this valley; whether the PCs are able to enter them and if any valuable ore still exists in the mine tunnels are decisions left to the DM's discretion.

G. The Dwarven Outpost. At this part of Deception Pass, the dwarves constructed a small complex even with the upper ridge of the cliffs bordering Deception Pass (120' above the pass floor). This complex was primarily a defensive fortress; it allowed the dwarves to survey the pass and the surrounding mountains for a distance of nearly two miles on clear days, and it provided protection for the ore cars that were brought up from the mines.

At the base of the cliff face are a pair of 15' tall stone portals that once served as the main entrance to the dwarven realm; however, the dwarves magically sealed the entrance closed when they abandoned their stronghold for a new home. The doors can be opened only by the following means: battering them down (250 hp damage required—any sharp or pointed weapon must save vs.

normal blow for each successful strike against the AC 0 stone portals or be damaged and unusable until repaired); using a *dispel magic* spell (vs. 12th-level magic); casting a *transmute rock to mud, disintegrate, limited wish* or *wish* spell. A *knock* spell does not work, nor do spells such as *dimension door* or *passwall*.

The Dwarven Outpost

The dwarven outpost, even though it has been maintained somewhat by the ogre magi, has areas in various states of decay. Part of the entry tower has collapsed due to structural damage from Taskern's spells, and a collapse has occurred on the access ramp as well (area 25). However, the majority of the outpost is fairly intact, and the ogre magi have restored some of the dwarven traps to working order.

All corridors in the outpost have 5' high ceilings unless otherwise noted. This may cause problems for some PCs; anyone over 5' tall is forced to fight awkwardly, suffering a -2 penalty to hit in combat. Any weapon over 4½' long cannot be used in the corridors unless it is a stabbing or thrusting weapon such as a spear. This rule applies to the PCs as well as servants of the ogre magi and the ogre magi themselves, if they have assumed a form that is at least 5' high. A light source, if any, is indicated for each encounter area in the outpost.

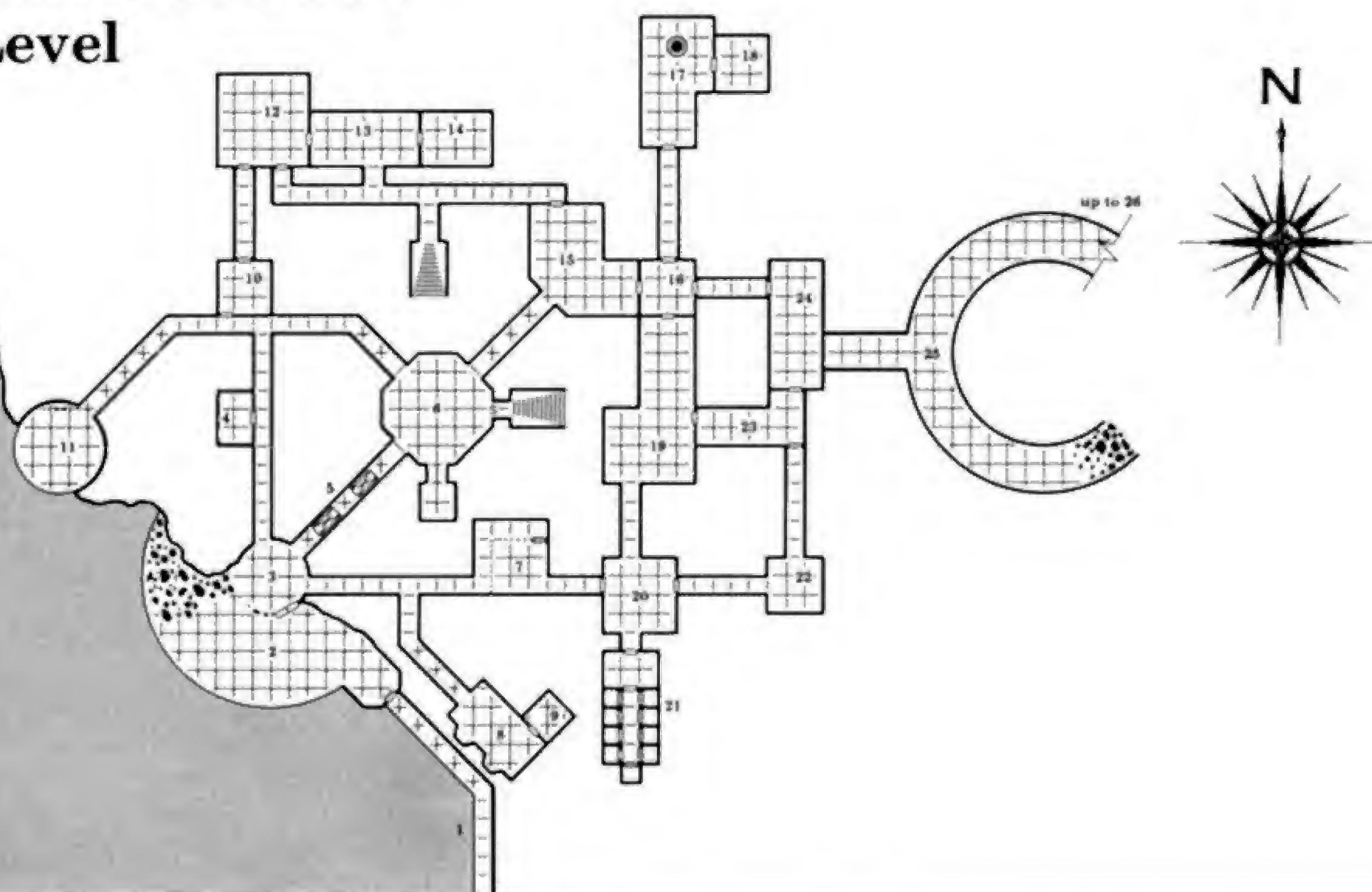
The location of the ogre magi in the keep will depend greatly upon PC actions. As the PCs move through the complex, it is likely they will be shadowed by one or more *invisible* ogre magi armed with missile weapons. If the ogre magi were able to successfully retreat to the complex after their surprise ambush and were not pursued, they defend their lair as described in various area descriptions. If the PCs were able to give chase, Krugii and Eli make sure that Sablius is able to safely retreat to his lair in room 38 via area 35. The other ogre magi try to lure the PCs into the lower level of the complex away from the dragon while Krugii and Eli round up their servants to defend Sablius.

If any of the ogre magi are killed, the actions listed in the text should be amended to exclude those slain, although the ogre magi will use their *regeneration* powers to reappear if not permanently killed. If the ogre magi

DWARVEN OUTPOST

Lower Level

1 square = 10'



suffer heavy casualties (Krugii or Sablius is slain, or two ogre magi die in the ambush), the survivors quickly gather whatever treasure that they can and flee the area. They wait until the PCs have left the outpost, then they return to their lair and lie low for several months. Eventually, the ogre magi begin harassing the caravan trade again, creating the same problems anew. In no case will Krugii surrender to the PCs; his forced surrender to the Celestial Emperor has given him a hatred of acknowledging defeat.

1. Dwarven Stairway (natural lighting). At the top of a narrow staircase that zig-zags up the cliff face is a 200'-long walkway. The walkway has battlements along its length for use during a siege; many of them are now weather-beaten and in bad shape. The walkway gently slopes up to the north and ends in a short flight of stairs. At the top of the stairs is an iron door set into the side of a small gatehouse.

The iron door and gatehouse comprise a defensive structure that also acts as a trap for intruders who try to enter the outpost by means of the stairway (see

area 2 for details of the trap). Unless the PCs possess climbing abilities or spells permitting aerial movement, they must reach the battle platform through the gatehouse.

2. Battle Platform (natural lighting). This area was designed by the dwarves to be suitable for counterattacks with siege equipment on enemies in the pass. The two towers (areas 3 and 11) allowed the dwarves to support their fellows already on the platform, and provided extra defensive strength.

Stationed in front of the crumbling double doors of the tower is Ashlor Mantirra, a *charmed* half-elf. Ashlor has been instructed by the ogre magi to activate the gatehouse trap and inform the goblins in area 3 of any intruders. He notices any approaching PCs on a roll of 1-7 on 1d8 unless the PCs are *invisible*. If he spots interlopers, the half-elf warns the goblins and moves to the gatehouse.

When any PC approaches to within 5' of the iron gatehouse door, Ashlor pulls a lever that allows the weighted and spring-held door to fly open, hitting anyone within 5'. The door does 2-16 hp

damage to anyone it strikes. Simultaneously, 5,000 steel ball bearings are released onto the stairs and walkway, making movement difficult. Anyone attempting to move faster than half speed on the stairs or on the northernmost 20' of the walkway must roll under his dexterity on 4d6 or slip and fall. Finally, a great portcullis drops into place 6" behind the doorframe. Its iron bars are too thick to be bent, but the gate may be lifted if the appropriate roll is made.

Ashlor retreats into the tower and nocks an arrow, firing it at the first individual past the gatehouse. He then heads for room 6 via the trapped corridor (area 5), activating the pits along the way. After warning those present in room 6, he heads to room 30 on the upper level.

The platform itself is unremarkable except for a pile of rubble that creates a slope up to the hole at area 35. A skilled PC might climb the rock pile, but he would be attacked by its residents (see area 35 for more details).

Ashlor Mantirra: AC 3; MV 9; F4; hp 27; #AT 2 (bow) or 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 12, I 13, W 10, Ch

13; ML 16; AL NG; chain mail, long sword, long bow, 20 arrows, 34 gp.

Ashlor is the only surviving member of an ill-fated expedition into the Taamusk Mountains. Being a little too foolhardy, Ashlor tried to assault the dwarven complex in search of treasure even after his companions had already been killed in a mountaineering accident. Consequently, he was *charmed* by Kruggi and placed here as a guard. If Ashlor is rescued from his current predicament, he will be grateful to his liberators—even to the extent of serving them for 1-2 weeks. Eventually, Ashlor will leave the PCs and return to his homeland.

3. Tower (9' ceiling, campfire). This tower represented the outpost's first line of defense, and its walls bear many crossbow slits. Portions of the tower have collapsed over time as magical spells have weakened them. The double doors have not weathered well, either; they hang loosely from their hinges.

Three goblins are seated around a fire here, slowly cooking a lizard. They were bullied into service by Tori, who has threatened to kill and eat all of them if they do not cooperate. These goblins serve only as messengers to warn the complex of intruders; they will not fight, even if cornered. Their only treasure is a bronze amulet worth 2 gp.

Goblins (3): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; ML 3; AL LE; MC.

4. Weapon Storage (6' ceiling, no illumination). This chamber was originally a temporary storeroom for weapons used by dwarves on duty in the complex. Empty racks for crossbows and other weapons decorate the walls. The only items in the room are five rusted battle axes. While no ogre magi is initially encountered here, one may flee to this room to recuperate from wounds inflicted by the PCs.

5. Defensive Corridor (sloped ceiling, two torches). This corridor, along with the other two that radiate outward from the tower, was designed to prohibit large invasion forces from entering the dwarven halls all at once. The ceiling in this hall is 9' high at the southwest end and slopes to 5' near room 6. This unusual construction distorts the perceptions of anyone firing a missile weapon (other than a crossbow), giving -1 to hit. After three rounds, the PCs become

accustomed to the hall and fight with no penalty.

In the corridor are two covered pit traps. Normally inactive, a secret catch at the northeast end of the hall arms and disarms the traps. Once activated by Ashlor, the pit covers collapse under any weight over 50 lbs., dropping a victim 20' for 3-18 hp damage. The covers snap shut one round after being triggered; anything used to prop the pit covers open must save vs. crushing blow due to the excellent dwarven construction of the traps.

6. Defensive Chamber (8' ceiling, magical lighting). This chamber is the hub of the interior defense for the outpost. The pit traps at area 5 served to weaken the dwarves' enemies, who were later allowed to capture this chamber—a tactic that often backfired on the invaders.

The three raised portcullises at the entrances to the room are attached to a timing mechanism beneath the stone floor. The secret catch to start the timer is beneath a loose stone in the center of the room; it causes the gates to fall five rounds after activation. Anyone beneath a gate when it falls suffers 2-16 hp damage unless he rolls under his dexterity on 1d20. The timing device allowed the dwarves to lure enemies here, set the trap, and retreat, capturing their foes within the chamber.

The floor is cluttered by two benches, two tables, an ale keg, and a pile of junk in the southeast corner. Homer, a *charmed* guard from a long-destroyed caravan, is stationed here, and Krugii and Eli are here also, watching the other two corridors for intruders.

When a trap is triggered, the occupants of room 6 throw a table across the entrance, and the ogre magi, *polymorphed* as dwarves, begin firing light crossbows from behind the table. They both gain the benefit of 75% cover (-7 bonus to armor class from missile fire) from the impromptu barrier. Eli and Krugii move out of sight and turn *invisible* if the PCs harm them or come near the barricade. The first PC to step over the table is attacked by Homer, who always gets surprise in this situation.

If the party approaches from any other direction, the ogre magi try to draw the PCs into this room and trap them in here. Homer does battle with anyone he does not recognize, and he fights to the death.

A secret door in the west wall leads down to area 29. The mechanism for raising the portcullises is hidden behind a locked secret panel in the storage chamber south of area 6. If the junk pile is searched, a treasure may be found: a marble statuette of a horse (worth 60 gp).

Homer: AC 5; MV 9; F5; hp 26; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16; D 15; ML 13; AL N; ring mail, shield, spear, short sword.

7. Corridor Guard Post (6' ceiling, two torches). This area has been designed to allow defenders to fire on intruders through arrow slits while creating navigation problems for a large enemy force. The door to this chamber can be barred shut, and it is 60% likely to be barred when PCs arrive.

Two young Amril mercenaries, Willie and Drew, nervously watch the corridors for intruders. Ondako captured them as they wandered about in the pass, and he has played a cruel trick on them. He meets with the young men in vampire form, telling them to behave or he'll "suck their blood out." Naturally, Willie and Drew make model servants. They fire their short bows at anyone that they do not recognize, but they flee or surrender once the PCs break into the room.

Although both Willie and Drew wish to leave the complex, they fear the "wrath of the vampire" too much to attempt to escape. Willie usually acts as the spokesperson for both young men, as Drew is very quiet unless he is angered. If befriended, Willie and Drew comply with any reasonable request by the PCs, but they refuse to put themselves in positions of danger.

The only furnishings in the chamber are two straw pallets, a rickety table, and three stools. Neither youth has any treasure, as they have given it all to Ondako.

Willie and Drew: AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 9, 6; THAC0 20; #AT 2 (bow) or 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; AL LN; short bow, 12 arrows, leather armor, spear.

8. Spy Post (5' ceiling, no illumination). This small crossbow post has been carefully camouflaged into the cliff face so that it is indistinguishable from the surrounding rock. It allowed the dwarves to fire down on the walkway during a siege, and to ascertain the identity of visitors.



The chamber is empty except for the dust and grime that has accumulated over the years. On the south wall is a circled cross with an inscription in dwarvish beneath it. This symbol signifies that an elite dwarven guardsman was slain here during the wizard Taskern's raid on the outpost.

9. Archery Storage (5' ceiling, no illumination). This room contains a supply of tools for repairing and maintaining crossbows, a locker of 200 bolts, and a few light crossbows in usable shape. This cache of weapons was ignored by the ogre magi because of the relative abundance of discarded weapons elsewhere in the complex. Aside from the equipment, the room is unremarkable.

10. West Corridor Post (6' ceiling, one lamp). This guard post protects the access corridor from room 3 and the hallway to room 11. A spy hole is set 3½' off the floor on the southern wall of the chamber, providing a view of the north-south hallway. Nevra, a female human wizard *charmed* by Zusuka, stands watch here. If she sees any intruders, she fires her *magic missile* spell.

and drops the portcullis just outside the chamber (this noise alerts those present in area 6 if the PCs have not encountered them yet). After dropping the gate, Nevra casts an *audible glamer* spell of several men conversing in the room, and she slips out the back door and up the stairs to area 30.

A table and four rotten chairs are piled into a corner of the room. An empty caravan crate serves as a bench, and a barrel as a table. Upon the crate are several papers bearing meaningless scrawls. If the walls are searched, a secret panel in the west wall may be found; it holds 200 gp and four silver armbands worth 20 gp each.

Nevra: AC 9; MV 12; M5; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; D 15; I 16; ML 13; AL N; spells: *audible glamer*, *light*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *detect invisibility*, *stinking cloud*, *slow*. Nevra was captured and *charmed* by the ogre magi when she attempted to cross the pass alone. She is a courier for an important diplomat in Ascheria, and the message she carries is sewn into the lining of her robes. The importance this information is left up to the DM, but it is likely that the news she carries is several weeks old (the length of her stay in captivity). Even if the *charm* is dispelled, Nevra remains aloof from the PCs. She will tell no one of her secret mission, claiming instead to have been lost in the mountains when she was captured.

11. Defensive Tower (9' ceiling, no illumination). This tower has weathered time well and has suffered little structural damage over the years. Two ballistas were left behind by the dwarves, and the ogre magi have devised a deadly trap with them. Across the entrance to the room is a thin tripwire, noticeable only if the PCs search for it. Anyone tripping the wire causes the ballistas to fire at him, attacking as 8-HD monsters and doing 2-16 hp damage each. The ogre magi are aware of the tripwire and avoid it.

A rickety wooden ladder leads up to room 36. There is a cumulative 20% chance that the ladder will collapse for every 100 lbs. of weight placed on it. Next to the ballistas are four spare bolts.

12. Lounge (8' ceiling, continual light lamp). This room served as the recreational area for off-duty dwarven guards-

men. Most of the furniture was left behind; the room contains two tables, nine stools, a bench, two kegs of soured wine, and a sturdy wooden chest.

The chest shows signs of abuse, as the ogre magi have tried to open it without success. It is both locked and trapped. If opened without the key (owned by a dead merchant), 12 darts fire to the front and sides when the lid is raised, for 1-3 hp damage per dart. Inside are 300 sp, 100 gp, a voucher for 100 gp of gems held in any nearby city, and an *onyx dog*. Beneath the treasures is a velvet cloth that hides a *glyph of warding* (18 hp fire damage) that has been placed on the bottom of the chest.

It is 50% likely that Zusuka is present, pretending to be a captured dwarf, when the PCs enter this room. Zusuka behaves strangely, as if he were *charmed*, to draw suspicion away from himself. If he joins the PCs, Zusuka tries to hang in the back so he can blast the entire group with a *cone of cold*.

13. Barracks (6' ceiling, no illumination). This room contains the remains of one of the sleeping quarters for dwarven guardsmen. Rotten bunks with tattered sheets line the mold-covered walls. Aside from two circled crosses on the north wall (see area 8), there is nothing remarkable here.

14. Barracks (6' ceiling, no illumination). Identical to area 13, this room is used as a disposal area by the outpost's inhabitants. An awful stench hangs in the air, and anyone searching the garbage in here has a 25% chance per round of encountering 1-4 rot grubs.

Rot grubs (1-4): AC 9; MV 1; HD 1 hp; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA burrow through skin to heart, kill host in 1-3 turns; ML 5; AL N.

15. Gallery (10' ceiling, four torches). This large hall contains many interesting items from the dwarven civilization. The walls are decorated with painted murals of the dwarven tribe's history, and a faded standard hangs over each entrance. Ten suits of dwarven plate mail, complete with short halberds and colorful shields, line the walls. These treasures were left behind because of their bulk and lack of usefulness; they remain as a tribute to the former owners of the outpost.

The first time that the gallery is entered, Eli is hiding *invisibly* behind one

of the suits of armor. When a lone PC inspects this armor or turns his back on it, Eli flies upward with the armor, making it appear to be possessed. He then drops the suit on a PC (for 1-10 hp damage; this does not cause him to become visible) and flies out of the room to watch the ensuing panic. He may use some of his powers to cause confusion, and to force PC spell-casters to use their spells unwisely.

A careful search of the suits of armor reveals a lost moonstone (worth 100 gp) in the foot of one suit. The banners could bring up to 25 gp apiece if sold.

16. Antechamber (6' ceiling, no illumination). This room is well traveled, as it leads to many parts of the outpost. Although nothing can be found here except dust, an *invisible* ogre mage tailing the PCs might slam a door shut behind them, if the DM so desires.

17. Well Room. (6' ceiling, glowing fungus). The sounds of water dripping and sloshing can be heard when the PCs enter this chamber. A stone well carved with dwarven faces dominates the room, and several casks of water sit against the north wall. A wooden pole rests across the lip of the well; wrapped around it is 50' of rope tied to a wooden bucket. The water level in the well is 35' below the top of the well. Phosphorescent fungi lines the sides of the well, casting an eerie glow about the room. Aside from the dampness, the chamber is otherwise unremarkable.

18. Well Storage (6' ceiling, no illumination). This chamber contains maintenance tools for the well and containers for storing water. Open barrels, sacks of lime, and hemp rope clutter the floor. The door to this room can be locked from the outside. If an ogre mage is following the PCs, he may be able to lock the adventurers in this room! Should this happen, 50 hp damage is required to break down the AC 3 door, though a bend bars/lift gates strength roll will do the same.

If the ogre magi are successful in this endeavor, they will probably devise an impromptu and fiendish trap for the PCs to encounter on escaping from the locked room. One or two ogre magi arm themselves with crossbows and *invisibly* wait for the adventurers to break down the door. The ogre magi then fire on the first PC to exit through the ruined door.

The target PC receives no shield or dexterity bonuses to his armor class unless he is specifically expecting a sneak attack.

Another possible trap the ogre magi may set is to pour oil on the floor outside the locked door; an *invisible* ogre magi could then light it with a torch. While the PCs might see a floating torch, the ogre magi would not become visible because lighting oil is not an attack. Anyone caught in the flaming oil suffers 3-18 hp damage for one round, then 1-6 hp more for the following two rounds. In either case, the ogre magi retreat once their trap is sprung.

19. Great Hall (12' ceiling, 1-4 lamps). This immense chamber was the outpost's mess hall. It still retains its original purpose, but the hall lacks much of its previous grandeur. The walls are blackened, the result of a *fireball* cast here during Taskern's raid. The majority of the burnt tables were scrapped; only five tables and 10 benches dot the chamber.

On one wall is a crude map of the land and villages surrounding Deception Pass drawn in chalk. This may lead the PCs to believe that a large scale attack is imminent. The map was drawn by Krugii so that he could gloat over the lands he plans to conquer.

20. Storage Room (6' ceiling, no illumination). This room is full of equipment and furnishings that the ogre magi have moved from other areas of the complex. Piled high against the walls are benches, barrels, old chairs, rotted cloth, rusted weapons, and other useless bric-a-brac. If the PCs search the garbage, an ivory and gold bracelet (worth 90 gp) is found after one turn.

21. Cell Block (5' ceiling, no illumination). This area consists of the turnkey's chamber and a second room divided into nine cells. Each cell has a stone door with a small barred window and contains nothing more than rusty manacles or some rotten straw. The turnkey's room contains a dwarf-size desk. While the drawers are empty, a spare set of cell keys is glued behind the top drawer.

When the PCs first enter this area, one of the cells is occupied by a small gnome. "Aro the Strong" is really Zusuka in *polymorphed* form, and he has a key that enables him to enter or exit

the cells at will. Aro claims to have been imprisoned by evil dwarves, and he will ask for armor and weapons to fight against them. At the first opportunity, Aro/Zusuka will turn on the PCs.

22. Unused Room (6' ceiling, no illumination). The temperature in this room is considerably colder than the rest of the complex because of the dwarven spirit that infests this chamber. During Taskern's raid, a dwarven guardsman was trying to deliver a report to his superiors when he was struck from behind and killed here. Unable to complete his mission, the dwarf has remained here as a haunt.

The haunt, Gramble, will try to possess a PC or NPC (preferably a dwarf) so that it may deliver its report to its superior (who is long dead) in area 34. If Gramble is successful in possessing a PC or NPC, he will be very eager to deliver his report. Unless the PC party includes a dwarf or gnome who can convince Gramble to stay with the adventurers, the possessed PC will leave the room and head directly for room 34 by himself (Gamble does not know that the ogre magi now control the complex). When Gramble realizes that Inko, the current denizen of room 34, is not his sergeant, he will try to slay the ogre magi, after which he will depart from the adventurer's body.

The dwarven clerics could not *exorcise* Gramble's spirit before they abandoned the complex, and since the ogre magi refuse to enter this room, the dwarf's body has remained undisturbed. It still wears its *chain mail +1* and a bejeweled sword belt worth 250 gp.

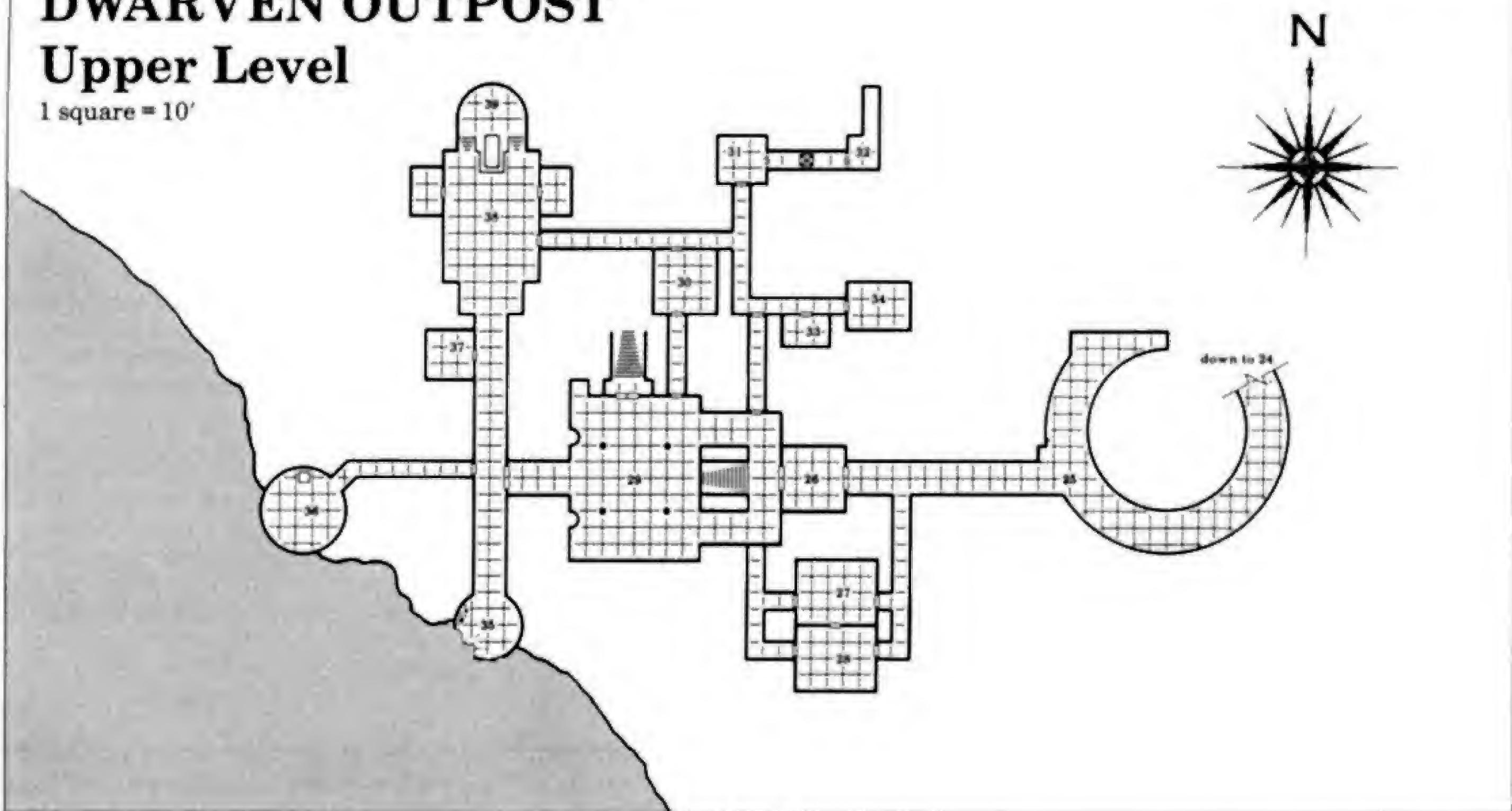
Haunt: AC 0/victim's AC; MV 6/as victim; HD 5/victim's hp; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1/1 as 5-HD monster; Dmg special or by weapon type; SA possession; SD special; ML 16; AL N; MC.

23. Kitchen (9' ceiling, fire pit and one torch). This small chamber contains a smoky fire pit, many shelves, and several wooden blocks and tables clustered about the floor. Hard at work preparing food is Amilia, a peasant girl *charmed* by Ondako. She cooks for all the outpost's inhabitants, and she lives in area 27 when not cooking. Amilia will not fight the PCs, and the only useful piece of information she knows is that her "master" is a pale, tall man with pointed canines (Ondako's vampire form). Amilia has family in Amril who

DWARVEN OUTPOST

Upper Level

—
1 square = 10^6



will pay the PCs 30 gp for her return.

Amilia: AC 10; MV 12; zero-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; ML 9; AL NG.

24. Large Item Storage (10' ceiling, no illumination). This room was used to store wagons and carts that transported equipment on the access ramp (area 25). Siege weapons could be disassembled here, moved through the complex, and reassembled at a new location. The dwarves removed most of the equipment when they migrated, but the ogre magi have filled the room with their own junk.

Flanking the double doors are two statues of dwarves. They radiate a faint magic, as they once were magical guardians. Four badly mangled caravan wagons fill the south end of the room, trophies of a recent raid. Few saleable goods remain in the wagons; if sold, they might bring 140 gp.

25. Access Ramp (16' ceiling, no illumination). This gently spiralling ramp represents a great dwarven engineering achievement. The ramp was once equipped with block and tackle gear, allowing the dwarves to safely and

easily transport heavy items to any level of their vast empire. Originally, the ramp opened onto 10 separate levels of the complex; now a cave-in prevents passage to the lower levels of the dwarven citadel. If the DM desires, an enterprising party might be able to clear the rubble and explore the dwarven halls below. At the very top of the ramp are the remains of several large winches.

26. Antechamber (7' ceiling, no illumination). This room was originally a preparation room for dwarven worshipers and priests. Garb for religious ceremonies, long since removed, hung on stone pegs. Aside from dust and cobwebs, the chamber is empty.

27. North Dormitory (6' ceiling, one lamp). This room is the living quarters for the ogre magi's human and demi-human servants. It is unlikely that anyone will be present, with only a 15% chance that someone is here (roll 1d6: 1 = Amilia; 2 = Willie; 3 = Drew; 4 = Homer; 5 = Nevra; 6 = Ondako). The reactions of the humans will vary, but Ondako will greet the PCs in his vampire form to confuse them, acting friendly all the

while. If the PCs are hostile, Ondako takes on a condescending tone, threatens to suck their blood, turns *invisible*, and leaves the room. Otherwise, he may try to *charm* unwary PCs.

The room contains six beds, several footlockers of personal items, and a table with four chairs. A search of the room turns up 46 gp, 60 sp, and a gold bracelet (worth 8 gp).

28. South Dormitory (7' ceiling, no illumination). This room is used as a storage chamber for some of the goods taken during caravan raids. Consequently, the ogre magi have placed traps on this area. The doors are not locked, but opening one without the key causes a small arbalest (a type of crossbow) to fire at the opener (attacks as a 6-HD monster for 3-12 hp damage). Inside the room are 17 trunks and chests, three of which are locked. The unlocked containers hold standard trade goods of minimal value (20-50 gp value per trunk or chest). In locked chest #1 are 350 gp, but two goldbugs rest atop the coins; they attack if disturbed. Chest #2 holds 100 ornamental gems (base value 1 gp) each, and chest #3

contains 30 wooden carvings and scrimshaw pieces worth 5-20 gp each.

Goldbugs (2): AC 9; MV 1; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA poison; ML 9; AL N; FF/46.

29. Outpost Shrine (15' ceiling, four *continual light* globes). This chamber was a central area of worship before the dwarves left the outpost, although the main temples still remain hidden deep underground. Few of the shrine's original trappings remain. Instead, the ogre magi have rededicated this place to their own gods. Oriental prayers and incantations have been inscribed to evil spirits on the walls, and several crudely evil drawings decorate the room as well.

Against the west wall are two 10' bas reliefs of the dwarven gods Clanggedin Silverbeard and Berronar, the patron deities of the dwarves who lived here. These statues have not been defaced, as their gemstone eyes (four 500-gp topazes) constantly glow with light. The statues remain under divine protection; anyone defacing them or stealing the gems is stricken with a *curse* (no saving throw; lose one point of strength daily to a minimum strength of 3 until the gems are replaced or penance is completed).

Stationed in this chamber are two ogres who volunteered to serve Krugii in return for treasure. They watch the corridor to area 38 and the entrances to this hall. If anyone is spotted, one ogre bangs on a large metal gong to warn the complex of intruders. If the gong is struck, all the ogre magi rally to the defense in room 38 within six rounds. The ogres each have a pouch with 30 gp and 80 sp, and a large club.

Ogres (2): AC 4 (hide armor); MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 31, 27; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (with club); ML 12; AL CE; MC.

30. Meditation Chamber (5' ceiling, one torch). Originally a room used for religious prayer, this spartan chamber is currently not in use. The ogre magi have used it to practice weapon techniques against dummies, and a great deal of straw and cloth litter the floor. A few weapons (swords and axes) rest against the west wall.

Ashlor and Nevra, two of the ogre magi's *charmed* guards, may be here if they have previously encountered the PCs and survived (see areas 2 and 10). They attack anyone who is hostile to-

ward them. If they hear the alarm from area 29, they try to sneak around behind the PCs and surprise them.

31. Krugii's Chamber (6' ceiling, one lamp). Krugii has taken this small chamber to be his quarters, mainly because of the secret escape route (area 32) that leads away from this room. To prevent unwanted intrusions, Krugii has trapped his door. Opening it causes a spring-held blade to swing through the doorway for 2-16 hp damage (save vs. petrification for half damage). Krugii normally avoids the blade by assuming a short form and ducking to enter the room.

The room contains a patchy four-poster bed, a table with sawed-off legs, a lamp, and several piles of papers. The papers are excerpts from stolen merchant logbooks and a manuscript of Krugii's conquest plans. The latter is written in the ogre mage language and requires a *comprehend languages* spell to be read.

Hidden beneath the ragged bed is a locked metal footlocker with a *magic mouth* spell on it that yells "Help!" 25 times in the ogre mage tongue if anyone other than Krugii opens it. Inside are Krugii's spell books containing six spells each of first, second, and third level, a *cursed dirk* -1 with a black blade, and a satchel of 25 cheap gems worth 20 gp each. Krugii will not be encountered here during an attack by the PCs.

32. Secret Exit (5' ceiling, no illumination). This back door was constructed to allow the dwarves to flee to safety in case the complex was ever overrun by intruders. North of the 20' x 20' chamber is a shaft with a ladder that rises 150' to a trapdoor on the side of a nearby mountain.

The corridor leading to this room contains a covered pit trap that drops victims 20' onto a bed of spikes (3-18 hp damage plus impalement on 1-6 spikes for 1-4 hp damage per spike). At either end of the corridor is a hidden catch that disarms the pit for five rounds. Inside the secret room are Krugii's most valuable treasures: four two-handed swords (one is a +1 weapon); 14 battle axes; an unlocked chest containing 180 gp and 900 sp; a wooden trunk holding four cubic feet of silk worth 800 gp; a 5' x 8' tapestry worth 950 gp; and a silver coffer (worth 100 gp) containing

five unmarked potions: *heroism*, *vitality*, *spectre control*, *hill giant strength*, *poison*. Krugii's *staff of withering* is also here unless the general alarm has been sounded. In such a case, Krugii hurries here and arms himself with the staff.

33. Eli's Chamber (6' ceiling, no illumination). This room housed the dwarven lieutenant in charge of the outpost; now it serves as the living area for the ogre magi lieutenant. The door is locked, and Eli carries the key around his neck. The only items in this room are a cheap mattress, some blankets, a lantern, and a locked wooden trunk. Stored in the trunk are five flasks of lamp oil, 10 gold bars worth 25 gp each, 600 gp, and two sealed wax scroll cases. One holds a wizard scroll (8th level of use) with *charm monster* and *tongues* spells. The other is a scroll of *explosive runes* (also 8th level). A secret niche in the east wall contains a treasure left behind by the dwarven lieutenant. Inside are an inlaid hammer +1, a potion of *healing*, and 250 gp in ancient coinage.

Eli is present in this chamber only if the general alarm has not been sounded. If Eli hears anyone fooling with the lock on the door, he assumes the form and role of a dwarven fighter/thief named Yoram who is raiding the complex in search of treasure. At the first opportunity, Eli turns on the party and raises the alarm.

34. Sergeants' Quarters (6' ceiling, two lamps). Eerie music can be heard through the door to this room. Once the door is opened, the source of the music is revealed: an ancient, yellow-skinned man playing a small wooden instrument. The old man, who is really the ogre mage Inko, is seated on a box, and the two lamps at his feet cast a strange glow about him. Against the east wall is a table covered with papers, bottles, and other trinkets; near the table is a simple straw mat. The papers on the table are poems and Oriental calligraphy, while the "trinkets" are writing and painting instruments. Inko has painted a beautiful scene of a valley on the north wall of his room, and he has written several mantras on the south wall.

Inko acts like a friendly yet eccentric old man while trying to learn as much about the PCs as possible. He claims to be the servant of a powerful wizard who allows him to practice his arts while



performing simple cleaning jobs. If the PCs are amiable, Inko offers to play for them on his *fochlucan bandore* so that he can *charm* them. After playing, Inko asks each PC for one silver piece, since they are all "friends." *Charmed* PCs will comply with this reasonable request. In this way, Inko can learn if his playing was effective. If the majority of the PCs are *charmed*, Inko tells the adventurers to make themselves at home and excuses himself for a moment. He soon returns with Krugii and the other ogre magi—but their intentions aren't honorable.

If faced by hostile PCs, Inko turns *invisible* or assumes gaseous form. Gramble, the haunt from area 22 (if present), tries to deliver his report to Inko. Since Inko does not act or look like Gramble's sergeant, the possessed PC flies into a rage and tries to kill Inko before he can flee. After suffering three rounds of attacks from the haunt/PC, Inko flees in gaseous form. This causes Gramble to "give up the ghost," as he has completed a futile mission to the best of his ability.

The trunk Inko sits upon is locked; its key is hidden beneath the straw mat.

Inside the trunk are 100 gp, 16 gems (worth 500 gp, 100 gp ($\times 2$), 50 gp ($\times 3$), and 10 gp ($\times 10$)), a wrapped quiver of 20 silver-tipped arrows, a pouch containing two pinches of *dust of appearance*, and several pieces of clothing.

35. Upper Tower (9' ceiling, natural light). The eastern part of this tower has collapsed, and a 12'-wide hole gapes in the smooth walls. Sablius uses this hole when he flies out to hunt. To allow the dragon easy access, most of the debris in this chamber has been removed.

A slope of rock and rubble descends to the defensive platform (area 2); it is infested by 100 giant centipedes.

Giant centipedes (100): AC 9; MV 15; HD $\frac{1}{4}$; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison; ML 6; AL N; MC.

The centipedes ignore Sablius because they cannot penetrate the dragon's armor, but the PCs will not be so lucky. Anyone within 5' of the slope is swarmed over by the little monsters unless large quantities of smoke or fire are used to drive them off.

Standing guard at this location is the ogre mage Tori. He is *invisible* 75% of the time, and is always *invisible* if he has been alerted to the PCs' presence (by the falling of the gatehouse door at area 2, or by noise on the battle platform. Tori has a collection of four boulders that he hurls at anyone climbing the scree slope (when Tori becomes visible, he will be in oni form). Anyone who is hit by a boulder suffers 2-16 hp damage and must save vs. petrification or be knocked down the slope. If the first saving throw is missed, a second save must be attempted. Success means that the PC lands at the base of the slope and is stunned for one round; failure means that the PC falls down the slope and into the pass, suffering 13d6 hp damage from the 130' fall.

Tori throws his rocks at the PC farthest up the slope, but he retreats and sounds the alarm in area 29 if faced by flying opponents or if he is wounded. Tori feeds garbage to the giant centipedes to ensure that they do not wander.

36. Upper Defensive Tower (9' ceiling, natural light). Originally a chamber that contained ballistas and dwarven artillery for defense of the outpost, this tower now serves as a storage room for goods stolen from raided caravans. Packed away in trunks and chests are a

merchant's fortune in goods—silks, cloth, pots, clothing, foodstuffs, spices, weapons, and other assorted items. Approximately 40 cubic feet of mercantile goods can be gathered up in this room; each cubic foot weighs roughly 15 lbs. and is worth 40-160 gp. These goods will require an extreme amount of time and energy to be sold at full value, and good-aligned PCs should make an attempt to return the materials to their rightful owners (all are labelled).

A trapdoor in the floor opens into the lower floor of the tower (area 11). The ladder below is unstable, however (see area 11 for details).

37. Guard Post (6' ceiling, one torch). This room was once a guard post designed to keep unwanted visitors away from the dwarven burial shrine, area 39. Zusuka and Ondako have taken up residence here. Because neither is a believer in neatness, the room is cluttered with useless junk.

Ondako has built a small contraption that is triggered whenever the door is opened. A human-size figure in a black cloak rises up from behind a crate, and a loaded crossbow fires from this dummy toward the person opening the door (attacks as a 4-HD monster for 1-4 hp damage). A clever series of pulleys and counterweights causes the stuffed dummy to rise and the crossbow to fire. Ondako thinks of his device as a great achievement. Zusuka, who has been hit several times by the contraption, absolutely hates it.

Amid the room's junk are the valuables of both ogre magi. Their treasure amounts to two sacks containing 150 sp and 160 gp, seven bejewelled swords worth 60 gp apiece, a tarnished silver place setting for six worth up to 200 gp if properly restored, and a *Bucknard's everfull purse* containing 26 ep, 30 gp, and 40 sp. Four turns of searching are required to find all the valuable items.

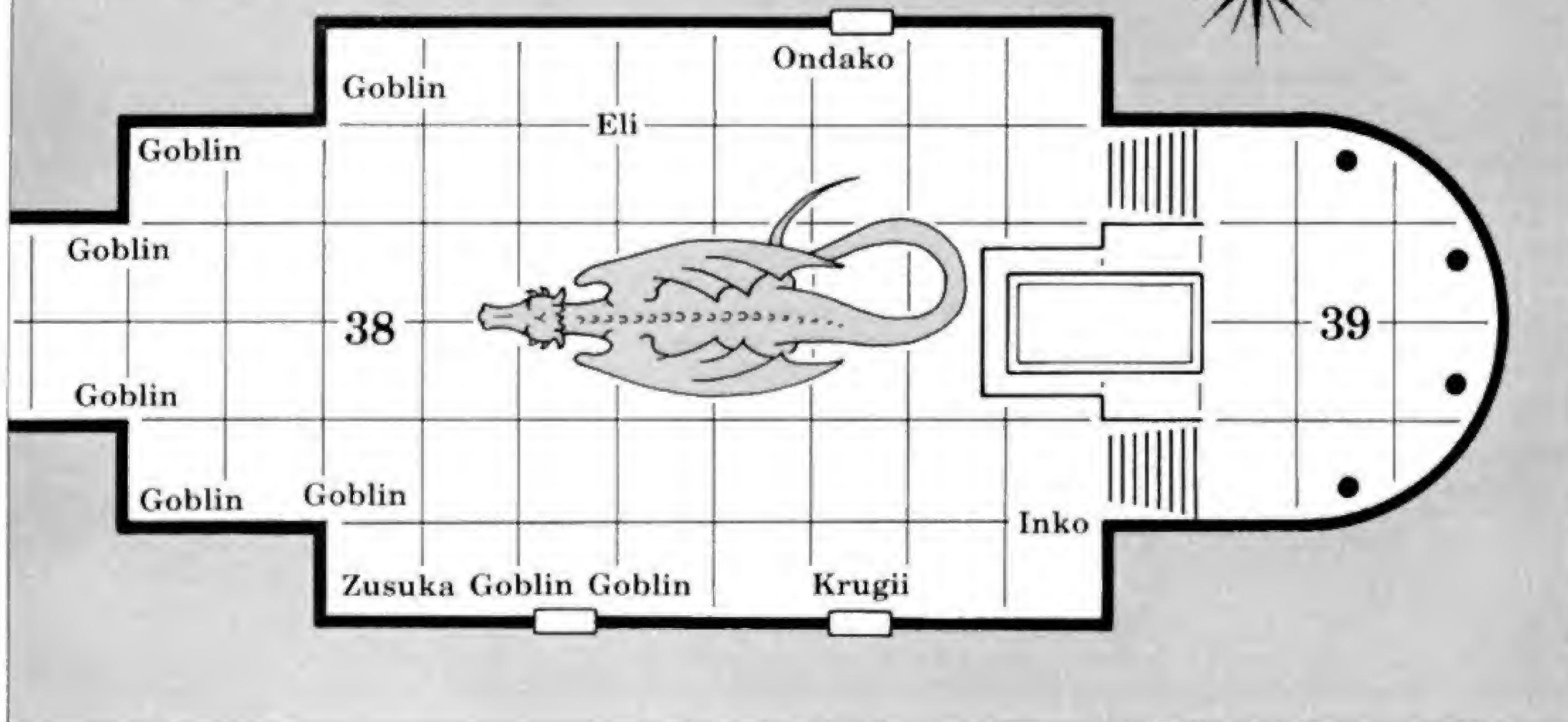
38. Dwarven Shrine (18' ceiling, two torches with *continual light* cast upon them). This huge chamber was once a mausoleum dedicated to Oron, the greatest hero of the Taamusk dwarves. The once-beautiful wall frescoes have peeled away; the marble floor is stained and scratched; the precious trimmings of the great hall have rotted away.

Now the most commanding object in the room is a 30'-long bronze dragon by the name of Sablius. Sablius rarely

DWARVEN SHRINE

Areas 38 & 39

1 square = 10'



leaves this chamber; more often than not, Krugii is here as well, spouting evil ideas into the dragon's vulnerable ears.

Always present in the room are eight servant goblins (hp 4 each), cousins of the three stationed in area 3. They wait upon the dragon, keep the chamber relatively clean, and serve as a first line of defense against intruders. Although the goblins are deathly afraid of the dragon, they are even more afraid of Krugii; he has made it very clear that he alone can protect them from Sablius. If any of the goblins would be foolish enough to disobey, well . . . goblin snacks aren't tasty, but they certainly are food. The goblins live in the side chambers of the shrine. These two rooms are littered with trash, ruining the sanctity of the ancient hall.

If the alarm has not been sounded in room 29, Krugii is the only ogre mage present. Otherwise, all of the ogre magi are present but *invisible* with the exception of Tori, who remains at his post in area 35. Once the PCs make their way to either entrance of the room, the final combat can begin. See the map above for a diagram of the ogre magi's starting positions.

Round 1: The PCs initially see only Sablius and the goblins. Sablius breathes *lightning* on the first PCs through the doorway, and the goblins charge immediately afterward. The ogre magi react to any PC actions and get ready for the next round.

Round 2: Two ogre magi that still have their *cone of cold* powers for the day blast any group of PCs, singling out spell-casters in particular. If more than two ogre magi retain this power, Inko is the most likely to use his *cone of cold*, followed by Zusuka, Ondako, and Eli. Krugii is least likely to use this power. If the PCs haven't spread out into the room, only one ogre mage uses his *cone of cold* power, casting the second ray two segments after the first.

Krugii casts a *lightning bolt* at an armored PC. He may cast *magic missile* or *web* if conditions aren't conducive to a *lightning bolt* strike. If not using a *cone of cold*, the other ogre magi act as follows: Inko fires a light crossbow, Eli fires a heavy crossbow, and Ondako and Zusuka *charm* or use their *darkness* abilities against nearby PCs' eyes in an attempt to blind them.

Tori arrives *invisibly* in the combat area from his post at area 35. If the adventurers are in the 20'-wide passage in front of him, he fires his *cone of cold* at their backs, leaving enough distance between the PCs and himself to prevent the frost from entering room 38. Otherwise, he circles around to the side corridor entrance and surprises the PCs there. The goblins continue to fight to the death, while Sablius melees with a lone opponent or blasts a few antagonists with his *repulsion breath* weapon.

Round 3 and later: The ogre magi try to coordinate their attacks toward the goal of driving off and annihilating the PCs. Any ogre mage retaining a *cone of cold* will probably use it in round 3 or 4 with the intention of harming as many opponents as possible. If Eli has not used the globes on his *necklace of missiles*, he uses one in round 3, hurling it down either passage at the PCs so that the explosion doesn't expand too far into area 38. Krugii may try to *invisibility* stalk a spell-caster and attack him with his *staff of withering*. Inko may use his *wand of wonder*, while Ondako and Zusuka commit general mayhem with their *charm* and *darkness* abilities.

If he is wounded, Sablius charges the entrance to the 20'-wide corridor that leads to area 35, trampling anyone in his way for 2-12 hp damage before he exits the complex and flies off to hide in the mountains. Until this happens, Sablius viciously attacks anyone who gets too close; he may even cast a spell if the combat is definitely in his favor.

The ogres from area 29, if not previously slain, arrive in round 3. Ashlor and Nevra (if still alive) arrive in rounds 4 and 5 respectively. Ashlor melees with the nearest PCs, as do the ogres. Nevra, on the other hand, tries to incapacitate as many enemies as possible with a *stinking cloud* or *slow* spell.

During the combat, the ogre magi use their powers in the deadliest combinations possible, and they use their flying ability often to get out of reach of attacking PCs or to move *invisibly* to new locations. Spell-casters and those attacking Sablius are attacked over other opponents. The ogre magi will always be in *polymorphed* forms when visible.

The ogre magi will not fight to the death, even though they have set up this battle on their own terms. If things begin to go badly for them, they will even abandon Sablius to save their own lives. However, the surviving ogre magi will try to regroup, hunt the PCs down, and kill them at a later date.

If forced to flee, the remaining ogre magi may attempt to hunt down the party and ambush them the next day. If this attack fails, or fewer than three ogre magi survive the encounters with PCs, they depart from the region and the PCs' mission is a success.

39. Burial Shrine of Oron (15' ceiling, four dim torches). This dais, 3' above the floor of the main shrine, is the final resting place of the dwarven champion Oron. The curved north wall depicts scenes from the hero's life: his birth, slaying a fiend, leading the dwarves to the Taamusk Mountains, his deathbed. Four glowing magical torches illuminate the wall, a lasting tribute to Oron's spirit and the purity that the shrine once had. Originally there were seven torches, but the ogre magi removed (and subsequently misplaced) three of them.

However, the most likely items to catch the eyes of the PCs are the piles of coins and jewels littering the floor of the dais. Sablius keeps his share of the spoils here where he can enjoy the shin-

ing coins in the light of the torches. His hoard amounts to 1,400 sp and 4,500 cp loose on the floor, and another 1,200 gp stored in six sacks. Many gems litter the floor as well: 15 worth 50 gp each, 20 worth 10 gp, and 91 worth 1 gp. Several silver-bladed swords and axes (worth 40 gp each) are stacked against the north wall, and a suit of gilded plate mail (worth 800 gp) completes the floor arrangement. Inside the armor is a potion of *water breathing*.

The lid of the sarcophagus is covered with bas reliefs, but it has been damaged and is easily removed. Inside the 1'-deep space are the valuable items of Sablius and the ogre magi. A *magic mouth* that screams "Thief!" 25 times is triggered if any human or elf removes an item from the niche. The niche contains two *short swords* +1, a jade scroll case (worth 100 gp) with a false treasure map inside, a *crystal hypnosis ball*, a gem-embroidered robe worth 1,250 gp, six 100-gp quartz crystals, and two *ioun stones* (+1 to charisma, +1 to strength).

Beneath the niche lies the coffin of Oron. As the dwarves did not wish for his body to be disturbed, a 4" slab of solid granite separates the coffin from the niche. To move the slab, 120 strength points are required.

The coffin itself is made of iron and is *wizard locked* at the 8th level of magic use. The inside of the lid is inscribed with a *glyph of warding* that causes blindness. The skeleton of Oron lies in the coffin, resplendent in his brilliant *plate mail* +2 and clutching a *war hammer* +3 in his gauntlets. Around his neck is a gold necklace set with a star ruby worth 5,300 gp, the finest gemstone ever found in the dwarven mines. If these items are removed from the complex, any dwarf within 300 miles of the pass that sees them will recognize them as belonging to the legendary Oron. It is very likely that a dwarven force would then be mobilized against the PCs to recover these artifacts.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs drive off the ogre magi but fail to kill all of them, the survivors will ambush the PCs in the pass a second time as the party returns to Amril. However, the ogre magi will fight to their deaths, as their tarnished honor will have been severely wounded by their defeat. This allows the PCs an opportunity to gain proof of their suc-

cess in liberating Deception Pass. Ogre magi scalps would provide some proof to the villagers of Amril, while a party dragging a subdued or slain Sablius to the village walls will certainly prove to Hendrick that the PCs were indeed victorious.

If the PCs are successful in driving away the ogre magi, and they return to Amril with proof of their conquest, the entire village will celebrate. A festival will be held in the PCs' honor that lasts for three days. The PCs must stay for the entire festival, as they will not receive the remainder of their payment until it has ended (leaving early would be a serious insult to the people of Amril).

Amril may be used as a launching point for more adventures in the area. The PCs may wish to explore the ruins of the dwarven civilization, or go in search of the tribe. Other possibilities include hunting down humanoid bands or trying to find a bronze dragon who can return Sablius to his natural way of perceiving the world. Ω

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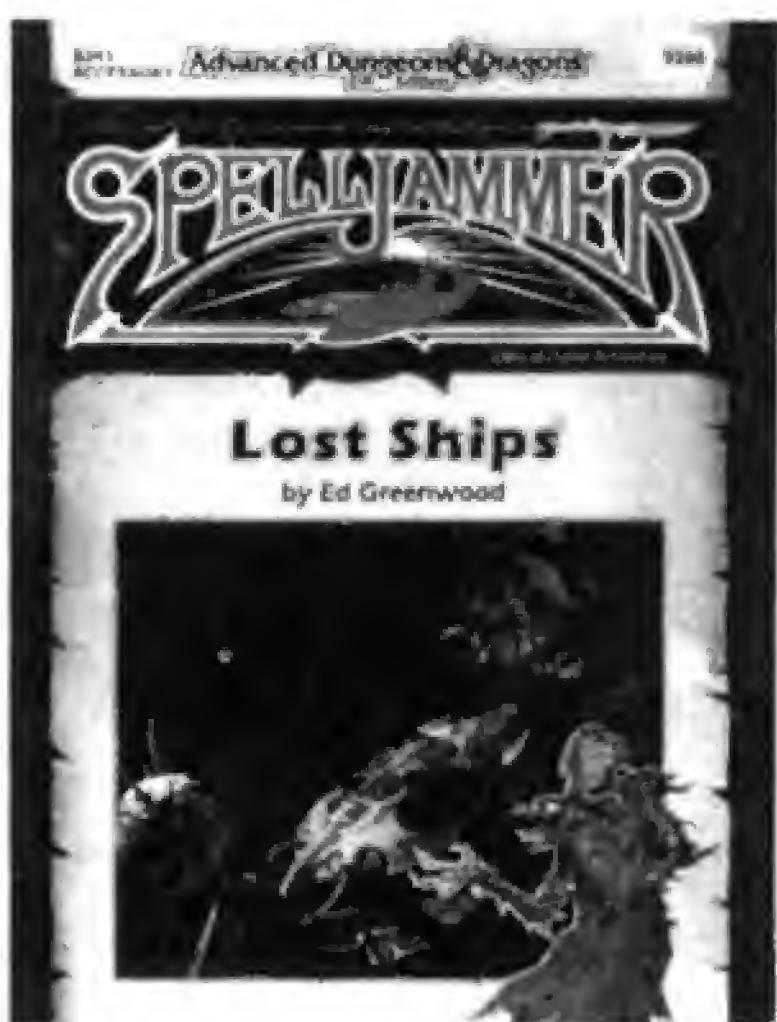
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